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Media Conflict and DEMocratisation

Judith Lohner, Sandra Banjac and Irene Neverla

Journalistic practices, role perceptions and ethics in democratisation conflicts:

Empirical findings from interviews with journalists in Egypt, Kenya, Serbia and South Africa

July 2016

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Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of core comparative findings from MeCoDEM interviews with journalists in Egypt, Kenya, Serbia and South Africa. It investigates the role of journalistic actors in transitional societies across a set of comparable democratisation conflicts and themes of inquiry: journalistic work practices, role perceptions, and ethical principles and dilemmas. Empirically, the study builds on qualitative *semi-structured face-to face in-depth interviews* with 100 professional journalists working for local news organisations in the four countries. Interviews employed the *reconstruction method*.

- The analysis indicates that to varying degrees, journalistic work practices, role perceptions, and ethical orientations could have both a *productive* and *counterproductive* impact on journalistic performance when covering democratisation conflicts. Consequently, the nature of the impact could inform journalism's role in democratisation processes as likely either *constructive* or *destructive*.
- Journalists feel their professional work includes a range of potentially productive roles. These involve not only informing accurately and fairly about democratisation conflicts but also overseeing and questioning political authorities (watchdog role), investigating and explaining the contexts of conflicts (investigator and teacher), capturing voices of the voiceless and fighting for people's rights (agent for social change), moderating between conflict parties and facilitating public debate, and finally seeking to keep the country together and to transmit messages of tolerance and peace (agent for peace).
- Journalists express commitment towards strong *ethical ideals and values*, for example, balanced and truthful reporting and consider it their ethical obligation to limit the likelihood of inciting violence. On the other hand, ethical ideals and values are at times overridden by journalists' personal biases (national, racial, religious, moral etc.), potentially resulting in imbalanced portrayals of conflicts. Pursuit of objectivity was at times deemed destructive to democratisation, especially when reporting of conflicts necessitates inclusion of information which could incite violence.
- Within journalistic *work practices,* the following are understood to be the overall goals when presenting a conflict story: enhancing conflict-sensitive reporting as far as balancing different sides of a story, challenging 'inciting' voices, and responsible choice of words. Yet, the described logic of 'sensationalising' and (over)simplifying of news and focussing on violence when selecting and framing a story seem to considerably reduce chances for conflict-sensitive reporting.

- *Cross-national comparative findings* reflect specific *country contexts* and structural conditions to be a consistent factor that shapes journalistic work practices, role perceptions and ethical orientations. On the other hand, various cross-national *similarities* have been detected, including "universal" journalistic routines and logics when describing procedures of selecting topics, investigating and framing stories. However, intervening structural constraints might lead to different outcomes of these practices. Most journalists refer to similar journalistic roles while their concrete understanding and implementation of these might differ considerably. Journalists across all countries identify overarching guiding values of objectivity and truthfulness, but their application depends on the (country and conflict-specific) dilemmas they encounter.
- Finally, journalistic work practices, role perceptions and ethical orientations seem to vary *depending on conflict type.* The journalists' individual perception of the conflict and the media outlet's stance seem to be crucial intervening factors during reporting. Moreover, role perceptions differ depending on the conflict: While journalists highlight watchdog and investigative roles when reporting on 'predominantly political' conflicts such as election campaigns and conflicts over the distribution of power, acting as agents for social change and agents for peace seem to dominate when reporting on conflicts over citizenship and minority rights.

1. Introduction

The main aim of this report is to provide an overview of core comparative findings based on MeCoDEM interviews with 100 journalists in Egypt, Kenya, Serbia and South Africa, focusing on relevant **journalistic work practices, role perceptions** and **ethical orientations** when reporting on selected democratisation conflicts in the four countries.

The report consists of several chapters. **Chapter 2** provides a summary of the research interest and conceptual background of the study, as well as an introduction to the four country contexts, different types of democratisation conflicts, and selected conflict cases. **Chapter 3** outlines details of the method of study, sampling strategies as well as quality measures applied to the collection and analysis of the data. **Chapter 4** discusses the main findings from the study and is organised around the above mentioned themes: (4.1) journalistic work practices including selection of topics, investigation, presenting and framing of the story, (4.2) interviewees' professional role perceptions and perceptions of their target audience, and finally, (4.3) journalists' reflections on ethical orientations, focussing on the values and principles guiding reporting as well as perceived ethical dilemmas during reporting and how they handled these. Finally, the conclusion brings all of these threads concisely together.

2. Research interest and conceptual background

Contrary to common assumptions that democracy enables peaceful negotiation of diverging interests of different social actors and provides mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution, experience in many emerging or transitional democracies shows that transitions are characterised by fierce societal conflicts and even violence (Voltmer and Kraetzschmar, 2015). This also applies to the **four countries** under focus in this paper: Egypt, Kenya, Serbia and South Africa. They provide diverse political contexts and implications for their broader regions (i.e. the Arab countries, sub-Saharan Africa and post-communist Europe) (see: Voltmer and Kraetzschmar, 2015).

In fact, democratisation unfolds largely through conflicts which include old and new political actors, civil society organisations and ordinary people. These **democratisation conflicts** are triggered by and accompany transitions to and demands for a more democratic form of government and can be understood as "communication events that crystallize around the interpretation of events, contested values and the legitimacy of power" (Voltmer and Kraetzschmar, 2015: 1). We argue that the dynamics of democratisation conflicts and their outcomes are determined by the way they are communicated (Voltmer and Kraetzschmar, 2015).

The relevant **types of democratisation conflicts** selected were: (1) conflicts over the distribution and control of power in the shaping of a new political order; (2) conflicts over different conceptions of citizenship rights by previously marginalised groups; (3) election campaigns in democratising regimes as they often revive and reshape existing social divisions and conflicts, boosting polarisation and possibly facilitating violence; and (4) conflicts involving struggles over the accountability of old elites and how to deal with the authoritarian past through transitional justice (Voltmer and Kraetzschmar, 2015: 17-24).

Selected conflict cases

	Citizenship (rights, minorities, identity)	**Distribution of power**	**Elections**	**Transitional justice**
Egypt	Christian-Muslim violence (2013)	Maspero incident (2011) Constituent Assembly (2012) Mohammed Mahmoud events (2011)	Presidential election (2012 and 2014)	
Kenya	Somali community/ Kenya's 'war on terror' (2013-2014)		Presidential election (2007) Presidential election (2013)	(also includes ICC prosecution of Kenyatta)
Serbia	Pride Parade (2010)		Parliamentary election (2008) (issues: EU integration/Kosovo's secession)	Arrest and extradition of Milosevic to the ICTY (2001)
South Africa	Xenophobic violence	Community protests[1] (2009, 2010; 2012, 2013) State of the Nation Address (2015)		

Across these countries, **journalism** is a ***crucial institutional actor*** in democratisation processes, and journalists become key players here. Following systems theory (Luhmann, 2000) and structuration theory (Bourdieu, 1993), journalism is a social institution with the function to observe society and its various fields, selecting and framing topics for debate and decision-making by the wider public. For that purpose, journalism does not merely "mirror" reality, but clearly constructs it (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996).

Certain structural elements - ***interrelated constituents*** - inform journalism culture and journalistic performance broadly and in specific democratisation conflicts and countries:

[1] Community protests are also interchangeably referred to as 'service delivery protests' by interviewees.

(1) Work practices – involving patterns of information gathering and investigation, logics and techniques when selecting (conflicts and other) topics and events to report on as well as routines when (re-)presenting and framing them (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Harcup, 2009; Entman, 1993);
(2) Role perceptions – shaped by what the journalists consider to be their professional tasks while executing their job and influenced by journalists' conception of and attitude towards their audience (Christians et al., 2009; Hanitzsch, 2011);
(3) Ethical orientations – consisting of certain values, norms and principles guiding reporting which become evident in perceived ethical dilemmas during reporting and decisions on how to handle them (Ward, 2010; Black and Roberts, 2011; Couldry et al., 2013);
(4) (Structural) working conditions – journalism is also dependent on structures in the political, economic and media systems as well as on journalism's relationship with (and degree of autonomy from) other social actors (e.g. state power and politics, economics, cultural institutions like religion, civil society and interest groups). In addition, structures of the professional field as well as working conditions and pressures within the particular media organisation are relevant (Hallin and Mancini, 2004; Hallin and Mancini, 2012; Blum, 2014; Bennett, 2013).

At multiple levels – the individual journalist, media organisation, professional field, media system and society – we can see journalism embedded in society. Interrelated and interdependent dimensions of structural conditions include: (1) historical development, (2) political system, (3) political culture, (4) media freedom, (5) level of state control and regulation of media by the state (including effective interventions against media outlets and journalists), (6) media ownership and financing, (7) structure of media markets and patterns of information distribution, (8) orientation of media, (9) political/societal activity and parallelism of media, (10) journalism culture, and (11) journalistic professionalism (Lohner et al., 2016).

Previous MeCoDEM papers reviewing the state of research on 'journalistic ethics and practices in conflict societies' (Neverla et al., 2015) and 'structural conditions of journalism' (Lohner et al., 2016) showed **several shortcomings in previous research**. In spite of a broad and rich research field on journalism, there is a lack of conceptualization and empirical investigation on the role of journalism and journalistic actors in democratisation conflicts. In spite of a very rich field of theoretical concepts on journalism, so far there is no elaborated theory on journalism in the context of conflict societies and transitional democracies. Only a few empirical studies have focused on journalistic ethics and practices in democratisation processes and transitional countries. Empirical research on journalism in conflict has focused on

different types of conflicts, however, roles and mechanisms of journalism in democratisation conflicts have not been considered yet. Furthermore, given the political economy of scholarly debate and research, a non-Western-biased concept of journalism is still a work in progress. Moreover, due to a lack of systematic and up-to-date empirical research, only a little is known on current journalistic practices, role perceptions, ethical orientations and their structural conditions in the MeCoDEM countries.

In order to fill these research gaps and to investigate the specific role of journalism in democratisation conflicts, the following **empirical research questions** have been formulated for this component of the MeCoDEM study:

- Which are relevant *work practices* for journalists reporting on democratisation conflicts in Egypt, Kenya, Serbia and South Africa?
- Which *role perceptions* do the journalists have when reporting on democratisation conflicts? How do they perceive their role within these conflicts, how do they define their target audience?
- Which *ethical orientations* do journalists follow when reporting on democratisation conflicts? What do journalists perceive to be ethical reporting in these conflicts?
- Which *working conditions* do journalists face when reporting on democratisation conflicts? How does the media's relationship with other sources of power influence reporting on these conflicts? Which are relevant sources of influence/regulatory and informal constraints inside and outside the editorial organisation?

3. Methodology

This study builds on **qualitative semi-structured face-to face in-depth interviews with 100 local journalists** in Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, and Serbia, and investigates the role of journalistic actors in transitional democracies across a set of comparable democratisation conflicts and themes of inquiry: journalistic work practices, ethical principles and dilemmas, role perceptions, and structural working conditions. Interviews were conducted by researchers of the MeCoDEM country teams between November 2014 and May 2015: 24 interviews in Egypt, 26 in Kenya,

25 in Serbia and 25 in South Africa, totalling 102 hours and 39 minutes of interview conversation. [2]

The researchers interviewed **professional journalists,** defined here as a person who works (as an employee or freelancer) for journalistic media, and is involved in producing and editing journalistic content or is otherwise in editorial supervision and coordination.

The **sample** includes journalists who covered different conflict cases, work in print outlets, TV, radio, online media outlets, public and private organisations, both male and female journalists, junior, middle-range and senior level journalists who vary in age, journalism experience, level of education and training, roles within the newsrooms (reporter, subeditor, editor, editor-in-chief etc.) and the beats they cover.[3]

Overall methodological principles were drawn from the study's research interest and shortcomings in previous research (see: Neverla et al., 2015): (1) an *innovative* and sensitive *qualitative* empirical design was required, (2) an *inductive, exploratory approach* for certain research goals. In line with overall 'comparative case-study design' of the MeCoDEM project (see: Voltmer and Kraetzschmar, 2015) we compared journalistic constituents *across countries and democratisation conflicts*, enabling case-specific in-depth analysis *within one country* as well as *across similar types of conflicts* in different world regions. (3) As democratisation is a dynamic, non-linear process, we applied methods that captured historical developments of journalistic cultures and working conditions *across time.* Finally, sampling accounted for *different media outlets, media types, and levels of professional hierarchy*.

Interviewers relied on an **interview guide** ensuring that all core aspects and subject areas were covered across all journalists, countries and conflicts under study, while

[2] The interviews have been organized, conducted, translated, transcribed and structured by our colleagues from the four country teams, namely Gamal Soltan, Yosra el Gendi, Rachel Naguib, Lama Tawakol, Aseel Yehia Osman (for Egypt); Nicole Stremlau, Toussaint Nothias, Seth Ouma, Charles Katua (for Kenya); Filip Ejdus, Aleksandra Krstic, Ana Stojiljkovic (for Serbia); Herman Wasserman, Tanja Bosch, Wallace Chuma, Kendi Osano, Sue Nyamnjoh, Travis Noakes (for South Africa). We thank them for their valuable work.

[3] A description of the sample of interviewed journalists can be found in Appendix 1. We thank Shorouk El Hariry for her valuable contribution to the analysis of this data.

also providing interviewers with enough flexibility to explore issues that might be specific to one interviewee, one country or one conflict case.

Interviews employed the **reconstruction method** (Reich, 2009; Flick, 2002; Flick et al., 2007) with an aim to reconstruct the interviewee's own coverage of democratisation conflicts by showing them a story they had produced in the past and motivating them to recall and reconstruct its reporting processes. This was chosen to foster "retrospective introspection" (Flick, 2002: 120) in reference to specific factors while going beyond broad self-descriptions and 'socially desirable' answers – a common criticism of quantitative surveys in the field.[4]

Data analysis and interpretation was based on techniques of **qualitative content analysis**, aiming at "data management, data reduction and conceptual development" (Lindlof and Taylor, 2011: 243). Interview content was categorized and interpreted alongside existing theoretical concepts (deductive approach) and open coding techniques were applied to identify further patterns (with an inductive approach).[5] Data analysis and interpretation was *case-specific* and in-depth (focussing on journalistic practices, role perceptions, ethical orientations and working conditions in specific democratisation conflicts in specific country context) and c*omparative* (investigating journalistic practices, role perceptions, ethical orientations and working conditions across different types of democratisations conflicts as well as countries). To ensure high quality of data and consistency of procedures across countries and researchers, **quality measures** were applied during data collection and analysis.[6]

[4] Given the conditions in the field, reconstructions were done in 19 out of 25 interviews in Serbia and in 14 of the 26 Kenyan interviews. In Egypt, 14 reconstructions were done. Since many South African journalists who agreed to be interviewed faced time constraints, a reconstruction could only be done in 2 South African interviews.

[5] Data analysis involved several steps using NVivo software. First, a consistent and structured integrated dataset was built by organising data material according to which participant it belongs to, the conflict cases it refers to and on the themes of inquiry. Second, the in-depth analysis was conducted for the different themes of inquiry. The involved researchers (authors of this paper) systematically accessed the interview sections that were coded according to different themes of inquiry. In various steps of data management and read-throughs of texts, sections were sorted alongside emerging patterns – this categorization was conducted using different NVivo functions such as memos for commenting on sections and assigning (child-) nodes to interviewee´s reflections. Through data management, data reduction and conceptual development, a scheme of conceptual categories and codes was built, summarizing findings on different themes of inquiry underneath different levels of codes and collecting those quotes that represent phenomena and patterns that have been identified in the material under each code.

[6] These included a clear and transparent design of research instruments, an interview manual with detailed instructions and explanations on what to do before, during and after the interview, three pilot interviews conducted in each country, ongoing communication among involved scholars, a

Notwithstanding these quality measures, there are certain **limitations to the data analysis** at this stage that should be taken into account when accessing the findings in the next chapter.

With regard to the 'breadth' of analysis, unfortunately not all of the themes of inquiry and constituents of journalism under study could be included in this report on findings. This is the case for the working conditions; although we will reflect on how work practices, role perceptions and ethics interrelate with working conditions in the different sections below. When it comes to the 'depth' of data analysis the report provides an overview of core findings across the categories – some aspects can only be mentioned, while others may be discussed in detail in further publications. Systematic in-depth analysis of country and conflict-specific data will have to be conducted by the country team experts at a later point in time.

Finally, the report cannot provide fully developed comparisons but rather 'comparative illustrations' (Smelser, 1976: 157-158) at this stage. A more in-depth comparison of data across countries and conflicts will be done at a later stage of the analysis. In reading the following chapter please note that there will be some overlap of examples across various sections. This is merely due to the fact that these examples were of relevance to more than one theme of inquiry.

4. Findings

The following chapter provides an overview of core findings focusing on several themes of enquiry, namely, (4.1) journalistic work practices, (4.2) role perceptions and (4.3) ethical orientations.

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transcription and translation manual to ensure consistency across countries, and a coding template for first data structuring. During analysis, the involved researchers regularly exchanged experiences and discussed each other's decisions on categorization and coding as well as challenging interpretations of the data. Moreover, a quality check was conducted, where two main themes of inquiry were coded by both researchers.

4.1. Journalistic work practices

4.1.1. Selection of topics

Journalists referenced several **main criteria** they apply in order to **select topics for reporting.** Not surprisingly and in accordance with universal journalistic selection criteria already detected in research, *novelty* is very prominently mentioned by journalists in all four countries. To be included, a topic “should be new” (Egypt, 1), “extraordinary” (Egypt, 1) and “truly unexpected” (South Africa, 16). In this sense, non-foreseeable conflicts and incidents, such as the lootings of the foreign-owned shops in South African townships are mentioned as unexpected developments to preferably be covered (South Africa, 16).

Furthermore, the “newsworthiness” (South Africa, 1) and “the social impact” (Kenya, 3), i.e. the *scope of the issue and its relevance* for the (national) public sphere are detected as selection criteria. In this context it is mentioned that, as “any service delivery issue speaks to broader issues”, some audiences “might not be directly affected by it but it's certainly something that they need to be aware of” (South Africa, 21). Given the need for newsworthiness and due to time constraints, journalists also report that for ongoing processes such as election campaigns they concentrate on certain key events such as “final conventions or some larger addressing” (Serbia, 17).

Journalists generally also prefer *contentious and violent topics* which increase the likelihood of democratisation conflicts receiving coverage. In this context, a South African journalist refers to the saying “if it bleeds, it leads”, reasoning that “peaceful protest action might be covered in page six or seven but a violent one will get coverage on page one or two” (South Africa, 1). Similarly, an Egyptian journalist mentions they would not write about sectarian conflicts “before it escalates” (Egypt, 12), while a South African journalist states that “the violence of the looting was one of the reasons why we covered the looting” (South Africa, 16). Furthermore, journalists would stress the importance of the *human element* in a story (“give me somebody that I can relate to on some human level” – South Africa, 25).

The decision whether or not to cover a certain story also depends on the journalists' motivation to *criticise or denounce certain conflict actors* ("condemned the behaviour of these savages" – Serbia, 18), the intention to *clarify* ("We were constantly producing the stories in order to explain to people what the intention of the [The Hague] Tribunal was" – Serbia, 21), and the journalists *motivation to prove* something (e.g. that Milosevic was guilty/corrupt) or report on an issues that upset them, especially in editorial pieces. In this context, a Serbian journalist said they wrote an editorial piece "because I was terribly annoyed when I heard the Mayor Đilas's statement. That devastated me." (Serbia, 2)

Journalists also report selecting topics or angles which go *beyond the official statement;* i.e. use this type of interview "in order to determine what their stance actually was" (Serbia, 18) or "get a story that was relevant with the election time" (Kenya, 4). Connected to this, reporting on topics which are "unpleasant" (Serbia, 4) or *not socially desirable* at a certain point in time is also mentioned as an important selection criterion (e.g. recognition of Kosovo in Serbia), however with different connotations. While some journalists especially searched for "unpleasant topics (…) which irritates a part of the public" (Serbia, 4), "problematic topics, which nobody wants to initiate" (Serbia, 3) and "stories they [people] are uncomfortable engaging with" (South Africa, 22), others would not cover these topics for the same reason.

The editorial decisions of other media outlets also influence the selection of topics in different ways. On the one hand, journalists want to report on *exclusive topics* or, at least, pursue a certain niche or "different angle" (Kenya, 25) that has not yet been occupied by other media. To that end, they would use information revealed by exclusive sources such as agents of the intelligence agencies (Serbia, 1) and exclusive interview collocutors (e.g. the then Serbian president "who at that time was considered the person making all the decisions" (Serbia, 18).

On the other hand, *inter-media-agenda-setting* is also important as journalists highlight that their selection process is influenced by what other media are leading with and making sure they are on the same page, by, for example, "watching what was being said in Aljazeera and CNN, cable news network" during the Westgate incidents (Kenya, 6). Similarly, topics that are *"trending" online* are likely to be

selected, as “internet and social networks have become the main source of information and creating a story” (Serbia, 14).

Topic selection is also based on assumptions or information about *what audience would be interested in*. A South African journalist refers directly to the economics of the newspaper, stating to use the “story that can best sell our paper” (South Africa, 17).

Finally, the selection of topics is influenced by *different kinds of societal actors and their information policy*. On the one hand, topics are obviously both selected and excluded based on more or less direct requests by governmental or political actors as well as other influential actors. On the other hand, *different actor groups* are mentioned as relevant **news sources for the selection of topics;** among them, professional communicators such as PR officers (e.g. “campaign communication teams”, Kenya, 3) or political actors (such as members of government, parliament etc.). Representatives of the *different societal groups and/or conflict parties* are also listed as relevant sources (civil-society actors, community-elders, religious leaders, also victims of attacks etc.). Independent experts such as *NGOs, analysts and researchers* are also mentioned (“I collaborated with guys doing a research on hate speech”, Kenya, 9).

In this context, journalists stress the importance of *personal “networks”* (Kenya, 3) and contact persons among different actors as relevant news sources (“friends (…) in the military who were involved in the Westgate operation”, Kenya, 6). Linked to the fact that the exclusivity of a topic is an important selection criterion (see above), journalists highlight that they would select stories based on exclusive information revealed by *civil-society actors, exclusive sources* such as representatives of the Intelligence service (Serbia, 1) or *whistle-blowers*. In this regard, a South African journalist reports that they were “the first one to break the story” on the power problems at Eskom, because they “received a call from an anonymous person who said ‘listen I can give you everything you need’. (…) They were feeding me with info and the whole story of the Eskom debacle unfolded”[7] (South Africa, 1).

[7] ‘Power problems’ refers to scheduled power outages across the country as a result of a number of technical problems faced by Eskom, the electricity service provider.

Among the *instruments* that are used as *news sources for the selection of topics* are *events* such as press conferences (Kenya, 3), conventions (political events/campaigns) and court cases as well as *documents* that can be used "as proof that would convince readers (…) that what we are writing is correct" (Serbia, 12). Among these documents might be reports and research provided by NGOs or researchers as well documents accessible via WikiLeaks (Serbia, 1). Furthermore, *other media outlets and the news tickers* of news agencies are mentioned. Information relevant for the selection of topics might also be collected via *phone calls, email, SMS notifications and tweets*. Finally, *observing the surroundings* and "looking around" (South Africa, 1) in everyday life is also mentioned as a relevant news source.

The reflections on news sources and the influence of different actors on the selection of topics directly lead to the **dynamics of selection process** which the journalists also reflect on in the interviews. In general, the selection of topics is simultaneously driven by the individual journalist's ideas, the decision-making processes within the media organisation and the agenda of external societal actors, and is based on constant observation, investigations, anticipation of future developments and, partly, also coincidence.

On the one hand, journalists constantly *observe the news situation* (for example via news tickers) as well as developments in the surroundings. Journalists may also conduct *investigations* to find possible topics. A South African journalist reports that "prior to the elections we were going to communities just to get a feeling of what the issues were" (South Africa, 2). Since conflicts evolve quickly and "usually the violence just happens" (South Africa, 1), several journalists mention the need to *anticipate* future developments in order to be prepared for future conflict reporting (South Africa, 8).

On the other hand, especially during high-intensity events such as conflicts, the selection of topics is very much *event-driven* as journalists would just cover 'what is there' and produce a "time line conversation" (Kenya, 23) of the events. A Serbian journalist explains that in the weeks following the arrest of former president Milosevic,

“there was no such need to propose the topics because the stories were producing themselves at the daily level” (Serbia, 8).

As will be further elaborated on in future publications focussing on working conditions within the media organisation, decisions around the selection of topics usually take place at *newsroom or editorial meetings* which, depending on the type of media outlet, are held daily or weekly. While, in some newsrooms and at certain instances, reporters might *propose* or “push” (Serbia, 3) certain topics, in some cases initiatives by individual (junior) journalists and reporters are not appreciated. Alternatively, journalists might be *assigned to cover particular stories*, most probably by editors and section heads. The selection of topics might (thus) involve different hierarchy levels and different stages of decision-making. Here, a Kenyan journalist reports that while senior reporters are directly assigned by section heads to do serious stories, ordinary stories are preselected and assigned in a planning meeting in the morning and evaluated, prioritized and allocated space in another meeting in the afternoon (Kenya, 26).

Stories are likely to be assigned according to “affinities, contacts, experience” (Serbia, 3), and based on the availability of journalists (time and location) to cover all aspects of a story (e.g. as regional correspondents). *Personal qualifications* matter especially in conflict reporting as seniors might request a specific journalist to report on a topic area that a journalist is “very good at in writing” (Kenya, 6). In this sense, journalists might also be assigned to cover one particular party during political campaigns (Serbia, 16).

Given the strong position of individual decision-makers (especially editors) in the decision-making process, the selection of topics also depends on *individual preferences*: On the one hand certain topics might be requested by the editorial policy of the media outlet, as one Serbian journalist explains with regard to the reporting on the Kosovo question: “Editing of the ‘Večernje novosti’ newspaper in that period was specific. There was an extremely strong female person at the position of editor of the political column and in fact she decided what would be on these pages. Of course she had certain political attitude, closer only conditionally to the Kosovo story, to that option” (Serbia, 5). On the other hand, some stories might be ignored

based on the editor's personal motives; a Serbian editor states that their negative views on homosexuality informed their decision about whether and how to report on the Pride Parade: "(…) my editorial policy is that we ignore the parade and the sick story surrounding it" (Serbia, 10).

Journalists also report on several **challenges in relation to the selection of topics** and share their **evaluation** as well as **criticism** concerning the selection processes and applied selection criteria. One major challenge arises around *(self-)censorship*. Journalists in Egypt in particular report that suggested stories might not be pursued or published because they criticise authority ("it is a nice story but it cannot be published because (…) it can lead to military trial", Egypt, 9). In Kenya, journalists report that the government was blocking the flow of news during the Westgate attacks. Journalists in all countries have confronted the challenge of how to deal with "economic censorship" (censorship via means of economic blackmail), i.e. the withdrawal of advertising due to the selection of topics (possibly) negatively perceived by advertisers or political owners.

Hence, while on the one hand journalists cannot use or access information due to the reported challenges, on the other hand journalists are also faced with an *information overflow* and have difficulty choosing stories when there is plenty happening. In this regard, journalists mention time and space limitations, and that they "only get to do a percentage of the stories" they want "to report and reflect on" (South Africa, 23). As a consequence, they would have to concentrate on key events of a certain issue, e.g. final conventions during election process because "not even the RTS [Radio Television of Serbia] with 4,000 employees, is able to cover their electoral activities every day" (Serbia, 17). Another journalist criticizes media outlets for being a "newspaper of record" (Kenya, 25), trying to cover too many stories and issues, instead of choosing fewer stories and covering them in a more focused and 'better' way.

Limitations regarding the selection and pursuit of a topic might also exist due to *safety problems* as it might sometimes be (too) dangerous to cover certain conflictive topics. Journalists report that the security of journalists assigned to cover conflicts had to be taken into consideration during high-risk events such as the Pride Parade:

"(…) having in mind that that Pride was marked by street violence and conflict with the police (…) we decided that high-profile journalists do not go to the scene as they will be recognizable and will be the target as soon as they appear" (Serbia, 1).

Finally, the selection criteria are criticized for sometimes being *"elitist"* – focusing too much on (political) "personalities", "factional interests" and the" issues of the ruling elite in a country" as opposed to the issues "on the ground" (South Africa, 7).

4.1.2. Investigation

Here, we wanted to know how journalists go about **investigating stories**. Journalists spoke about the various sources they receive story ideas from along with processes involved in the construction of the story and challenges experienced. Journalists mentioned a *variety of* ***sources they either reach out to or rely on to provide them with information for story ideas (see section above) but also for further story investigation****.*

Among the top sources were *government/political actors/authority* and the *police*, which is not surprising given that these sources are likely to be the most actively implicated with conflicts. According to an Egyptian journalist, the level of cooperation between political officials and the journalists "depends on the personal relationship with the official" and the length of that relationship (Egypt, 2). In their coverage of the 2007 and 2013 elections a Kenyan journalist explained that politicians were easier to access during election periods (increased interest in gaining media exposure) than after the elections, and emphasised importance of building relationships with junior officials: "(…) whenever I need any story I will still get them because my relationship was not just with the senior guys but the junior guys, the guys who will be doing the typing, who do all the donkey work, who have access to information" (Kenya, 1).

In Kenya, one journalist calls at least ten sources every morning including police at stations as well as in the field: "I have a very strong relationship with the police, not because they are my friends but because of what I do. I need them when I need access to confidential documents, when I need to be the first to know what happened" (Kenya, 13). Another journalist sees reports from the police as tips or

guidelines from which to look for the “bigger story” (Kenya, 26). Whenever they get new information, a journalist in Egypt calls their “sources at the police to verify” (Egypt, 21). In Serbia, information that emerges from police investigations is often placed into the hands of political actors or the media directly and used to “stigmatise” (Serbia, 14) or ruin the reputation of individuals. Journalists mentioned social media as a source of information (discussed in more detail further along in the report). Press conferences and statements are of course a means to investigate stories; mentioned were those issued by sources in Egypt such as the church (Egypt, 2; 14) and those issues by sources in Kenya, such as political parties (CORD) and actors (ministers), as well as members of the defence during coverage of the ICC trial and elections (Kenya, 3; 24).

In Egypt, during their coverage of demonstrations, journalists relied on “*media sources* consisting of colleagues covering the incident [and] students of mass communication” (Egypt, 20), “correspondents of the media who are in Tahrir” and “political activists” (Egypt, 23), as well as “eyewitnesses” (Egypt, 15). On their coverage of the Somali conflict, a Kenyan journalist did an “interview with one of the reporters who were on the field who went and came back” (Kenya, 23), while a South African journalist relied on “other media, especially radio, you know, the media that’s in the community itself” (South Africa, 2) before venturing into a community to cover xenophobic violence: “It’s a mixture of finding out from my fellow journalists, that’s quite often how I find out about stories (…) we’re kind of like a small group” (South Africa, 13) – indicating presence of a form of network of journalists exchanging news. During the 2007 election violence, journalists at The Star newspaper which at that time was in its infancy “were dependent on Kenya News Agency” (Kenya, 25) because they had so few correspondents to rely on (Kenya, 25). A journalist who covered xenophobic violence also relied on “analysts” because they “had their own studies done, they had figures” (South Africa, 2) and “wire services, particularly the local ones would have something” (South Africa, 5).

Journalists also relied directly on sources from *community members*, such as “sources from the villages themselves because most of my topics are social in nature, and I’m not keen on telephone calls” (Egypt, 21) and in South Africa journalists “rely on community leaders for information when it comes to protests”

(South Africa, 16). When they cover criminal investigations, if official sources were unavailable or compromised, a Kenyan journalists said they have "sources in the mortuary and if the police don't want to talk I know where they'll take the remains" (Kenya, 13). Covering the Maspero demonstrations one journalist recalled "I could not count the corpses. So I wait for my colleagues, the one official in the forensic pathology and they say that the number of the corpses is so and so, for example, or go to this hospital" (Egypt, 10).

During the Pride Parade a Serbian journalist relied on "non-governmental organisations" (Serbia, 3) as sources, and in South Africa "often one resorted to the NGOs and pressure groups, you know, lawyers and women's rights" (South Africa, 5) as sources on coverage of xenophobic violence. A Kenyan journalist relied on a "report" published by the Kenya Human Rights Commission, to produce a story "on how politicians are misusing public resources" (Kenya, 4). "Security chiefs and directors" and "civil defence" (Egypt, 20) were contacted by an Egyptian journalist on their coverage of anti-Coptic violence. Journalists might be contacted by a "church caretaker" (Egypt, 2) or a "pastor or the church council" (Egypt, 10) to report a church having been burned down.

Journalists were asked to describe the various processes they engaged in while ***researching and constructing a story***. Although *some commonalities surfaced* – reliance on eyewitness accounts in Egypt and Kenya when access to other sources was limited; building relations with sources in communities/villages; gaining access to information prior to official source; need for journalists in Egypt and South Africa to witness in order to report – their *responses revealed that these processes varied depending on the conflict* they were covering.

For *South African journalists* covering community protests and xenophobic violence, story construction processes were instinctive and something that happens automatically while they are out in the field. Journalists sourced information by building rapport with protestors or spending extended periods of time with community members, with a great emphasis on the need to avoid 'parachute journalism' and devote more resources to report in-depth the causes behind community protests and

xenophobic violence. They also felt it was important to listen to the voices of those affected and find the human element in the conflicts.

Egyptian journalists covering demonstrations stressed importance of verifying and confirming information by official sources (especially in relation to casualties of violence), however at times when official sources were difficult to reach, journalists relied on personal accounts and observations of what was happening around them and sources at the scene such as eyewitnesses to construct stories. Like South African journalists, an Egyptian journalist stressed they preferred to build relationships with their sources and meet with them in person. A journalist also highlighted occasions when they were aware of information before official sources.

During the elections *Kenyan journalists* mention receiving statements, press releases or conference invitations from the campaigns and having to accept the information at face value or face being removed from reporting a story; during the Westgate attacks journalists initially received conflicting information but felt limited to verify due to little access to alternative reports, and relied primarily on eyewitness accounts. As with Egypt, in certain cases Kenyan journalists had access to information prior to official sources, making them redundant in the journalist's construction of a story.

For *Serbian journalists,* preparation for the coverage of the Pride Parade began well in advance, and took into consideration the safety of journalists and availability of resources to cover such a large and high-risk event. Decisions on who/what/where/when would cover aspects of the Pride Parade were based on the contacts, experience and recognisability of journalists by the general public, including potential extremists. In most cases, journalists who reported on the 2008 election were mostly assigned stories by editors to ensure that all political parties were afforded equal media space. At the same time, due to limited resources available to cover the pre-election campaign, some journalists received media segments and reports produced by the parties themselves, eliminating the need to independently produce stories on campaign events.

The following are *detailed narrative summaries* of processes journalists engaged in producing stories according to country and conflict. In ***South Africa*** journalists spoke

of *going into the field and building a story on the go,* without always conducting prior research. One journalist said the police station was a starting point from which to pursue a community protest story, where to go and what to focus on: "I figured because it was so up in the air, what was happening, the best thing would just be to go there and find out" (South Africa, 13). Another explained they do not think ahead about how they might cover a story, but rather that it is a *process that happens while in the field:*

> You're part of it. Well, not part of it. But you're on the fringe of it. And you're observing you're watching. I mean you're listening, you're smelling, so, yes. And then when you have accumulated all the materials you want you come back to the office and sit down, go through it, see what you have, what you don't have then start compiling, talking to people again, role players different role players. (South Africa, 1)

Two other journalists described their method of sourcing information at *community protests* by *establishing rapport through low-key and casual engagement with protesters*:

> I don't really smoke that much but I carry a pack of cigarettes in my bag and water and stuff like that and if people are immediately not keen to speak to me well, I take up my water, cigarette, light the cigarette and I just, you just chill in their presence. And you speak to them. (South Africa, 15)

> I walk in among the people while they are protesting there then I ask them, 'what's your name, what's your surname?' This is who I am, declaring who I am, and 'I would like to know why you are here? Why are you protesting? (South Africa, 1)

Another journalist pursued a story on the ongoing challenge for people living in informal settlements and sharing communal toilets, that "snowballed" (South Africa, 3) after receiving *tip offs from residents* and regular reports from a journalism student and resident of the community:

> (…) I decided to go there and I wrote a story about the life of what it's like at night for example in the township when you are scared of gangsters or people who are criminals, especially if you are a woman at night (…) just like writing a narrative of what is like living with this toilet and looking and seeing that it actually has not been cleaned. Then I would write that. And then I just sort of like knew that it was a story that needed to be followed and then suddenly it became more sort of like at the level where there were politicians who were starting to take took note and they had press briefings and stuff. And then we

went to that. (South Africa, 3)

Several journalists highlighted the importance of *spending extended periods of time in the community and building relationships with its residents,* in order to better understand community protests; what mobilizes people, when protests might happen, and why. One journalist stressed that despite time and capacity constraints, reporting needs to focus less on the statistics and more on the voices of those affected. With a similar emphasis on the human element in conflict reporting, another journalist explains focusing on *speaking to sources close to a victim of xenophobic violence and visiting places they frequented:* "(…) piece by piece, I was putting together the parts of what I believed essentially forms a real human being. I then went and I followed the journey, I took the journey home, to take his body home" (South Africa, 18).

On reporting *xenophobic violence*, a journalist explains receiving story ideas or hints from other media reports, *going into the community "to see for yourself"* and *interviewing "as many role players as possible"* (South Africa, 2) from both sides of the conflict (locals and foreigners) and returning to the newsroom to compile the story based on what the journalist themselves had witnessed and the accounts of others. They may also contact analysts or experts from organisations who have published studies on xenophobic violence. Another journalist stressed their *dislike of desk reporting and preference for field reporting*: "I like going to a place and seeing what's happening because sometimes I would write maybe half of my story without even using quotes from sources because I was there. I saw what was happening" (South Africa, 16).

On covering *revolution protests*, journalists in ***Egypt*** relied on political activists, residents of the area where news is unfolding, correspondents, eyewitnesses and personal observations of the journalists to build stories. *Official sources were at times difficult to reach* so journalists *relied on sources at the scene* to string stories and provide updates: "(…) our main work was carried out by some political activists in the events, or some residents in the places of the events, correspondents of the media who are in Tahrir or in public places or sending correspondents to places that turned violent later" (Egypt, 23).

One journalist explains the next step involves verifying news by "*speaking to someone who was actually on site*" (Egypt, 20). Covering multiple aspects of a story was done by coordinating with and verifying news through political sources, fellow colleagues out in the field, mass communication students via Facebook for live coverage, security chiefs, directors of police stations and hospitals, keeping in mind that "in revolutionary events we don't have credible sources" and "have a margin of chaos and cloudiness" (Egypt, 23). When reporting directly from the protests, journalists relied largely on *eyewitness accounts*, protestors or residents of surrounding building, as well as the journalists' *personal observations*: "Unless I see it myself, I don't write it. If I hear it, I have to confirm it from different sources that I consider credible and look for eyewitnesses. For me, no less than ten eyewitnesses. (…) And among the ten people you ask, there are going to be nine different stories" (Egypt, 15).

When reporting on conflicts that involved causalities, journalists verified and confirmed information through forensic pathology officials, or a church pastor where a church had been burned down. However, one journalist explains avoiding official sources and relying on personal observation and account to report death of a demonstrator: "I came to the paper and the manager asked me how I had confirmed he was dead. (…) He said there had to be an official statement from the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Interior, announcing the death of people in the given protest. But I wrote that he had died because I had seen it myself" (Egypt, 15). As was the case for journalists in South Africa, one Egyptian journalist (Egypt, 21) explained that they *preferred to build relations with their sources and see them in person* and recalled instances of being *aware of information before other institutions or authorities* due to these relationships.

During the ***Kenyan*** *elections* (2007 and 2013), journalists were alerted about a press conference via email, or SMS, or a phone call by the campaign communications team shortly before the start of the press conference. In another example a journalist received an email ahead of the press conference (Kenya 3), which the journalist used to build a story. Journalists were also invited to conduct one-on-one interviews on pre-specified topics. Another journalist reporting from the electoral tallying centre was

“controversially withdrawn” (Kenya, 19+20) on accusations of implying election rigging, and replaced by another journalist.

At the time of the *Westgate attack* one journalist recalls receiving reports on the attack, but was dispatched only after the situation had escalated: “I did not care about getting calls even from the security personnel that time because they arrived after me and I have more information even than them” (Kenya, 2). Another journalist was surprised to find that they had arrived at the scene before the tactical team: “It was puzzling. (…) the issue of ineptitude was very high there. (…) …there was no plan it was just shambolic. So that informed some of these writings on that particular day” (Kenya, 17). To put their story together, journalists relied on eye witnesses (driver, security guard and those injured) because information emerging from sources inside the Westgate mall was “scanty” (Kenya, 2) and insufficient for a report. Journalists who relied on eyewitness accounts, claimed initial reports at the scene were more accurate than the ones they received an hour later, with later accounts being more elaborate and resembling “theories” following government intelligence coming to “shape opinion” (Kenya, 13). For this reason, one journalist preferred to source information from the police, believing that sources are less likely to give false accounts to someone in authority: “Usually it becomes convoluted and because you are a journalist, they know you’ll do nothing to them but if it’s the police you don’t find one giving theories to the police, because that’s a person of authority and you could find yourself in trouble” (Kenya, 13).

Coverage of the *Al-Shabab and Somali conflict* was almost entirely dependent on the information provided by the Kenya Defence Force (KDF), because traveling to Somalia to pursue a story was said to be “very demanding and expensive” (Kenya, 5) as well as risky. Shortly after the Somali conflict began reporters were asked to embed with police, but many who had families and children were reluctant to go, which led to a period of “armchair” reporting (Kenya, 23). Journalists explain that journalism in Kenya has taken on a patriotic role siding with the military, and any story that portrays them negatively draws hostility from the public.

Serbian journalists involved in the coverage of the *Pride Parade*, spoke of the magnitude of the event and the different factors that were taken into consideration

when planning its coverage. Journalists engaged in newsroom discussions and planning sessions to decide who would cover which aspect of the event based on the journalists' contacts, experience and how well they were known to the public in order to ensure their safety: "The decision who, where and how will cover was made a lot in advance. We were preparing for months for that because we knew that was a high-risk event. (…) Those who covered the police were the people with the best contacts in it; people who went even beyond that circle were those whom the rightist groups knew the least" (Serbia, 3). In order to protect themselves from attacks by right wing-extremists, journalists (in particular those working for B92) were asked to lie about the media outlet they worked for. Planning for the magnitude and complexity of the high-risk event, another journalist echoed similar experiences in terms of ensuring all journalists are available and coordinated, and have sufficient equipment: "These are the events which take the entire TV capacity and you often rent additional equipment and additional capacities" (Serbia, 17). Striking a balance between coverage of the positive and negative/violent aspects of the Pride Parade was noted as a challenge: "We didn't manage to process that atmosphere balance and that outside there was a real war and then it was a bit schizophrenic to listen to my colleagues telling dramatic stories about demolition of Belgrade after which I am in the air telling a nice colourful story about love and tolerance" (Serbia, 3).

During the coverage of *elections and Milosevic's extradition*, stories were either agreed on during editorial collegiums with the journalists, or the journalists themselves presented a topic and attempted to convince editors. However, during elections journalists were more likely to be assigned stories precisely because "the editors had to take care about every small matter because the parties at that time already were accustomed to call, pull, maltreat – 'why did you broadcast this and not that, why is he couple of seconds longer than my party's leader…?'" (Serbia, 3). Journalists also observed that prior to 2008 the media used to analyse promises made by election candidates, however due to limited resources and long election periods, some media could focus mainly on the political conventions and sometimes accepted "videos and a bit of speech" (Serbia, 17) sent by political parties, to be edited into news stories.

In the process of investigating coverage of conflicts journalists encountered and highlighted several ***challenges***; among these were: (1) verification of information and trust in sources/eyewitness accounts; (2) psychological and physical safety challenges – security/intimidation/threats/trauma; (3) time constraints; parachute journalism/armchair journalism; protection of sources; proving information/off the record information; (4) language skills/ethnic belonging; (5) embedding with police; (6) covering all aspects of story; (7) lack of safety equipment when covering conflict.

A major challenge for journalists was ***verification of information*** **and** ***trust in sources***, including *eye-witness accounts.* This was a particular challenge for Kenyan journalists covering the Westgate attack: "It was one of the most difficult assignments […] whatever information you are getting out of Westgate was completely unverifiable" (Kenya 7); "(…) there were conflicting reports from the government" (Kenya, 11); "(…) authorities, government officers were downplaying it in that if you had ten people killed at one place, they would not tell you that ten died, they would tell you nobody died" (Kenya, 25). There was little trust in social media sources (elaborated on in the following section on ICTs) and much of this depended on who was posting the information: "We couldn't tell what was happening, there was a lot of rumour lying around, a lot of rumour on social media also" (Kenya, 7). On coverage of the Al-Shabab and Somali conflict journalists were cautious: "It could be propaganda by them [Kenya Defence Forces] but we have no option but take the story as it is. Equally Al-Shabab sometimes sends statements and you can't tell whether it's really them or just some people in Nairobi" (Kenya, 5).

Both Kenyan and Egyptian journalists spoke of challenges with ***trusting eyewitness accounts*** of conflicts. Kenya journalists said unofficial sources, such as business owners and eyewitnesses of the Westgate attacks embellished their witness accounts: "They'll tell you, 'I hear a bang, I saw someone with that gun.' But if you go an hour later he'll even describe the kind of gun and maybe he has never seen a gun before. He'll tell you he was strapped, he was moving, he killed someone there. Usually it becomes convoluted" (Kenya, 13). Based on experience covering demonstrations, an Egyptian journalist said they preferred to witness events they were reporting on, and that eyewitness accounts yielded different stories (Egypt, 15). Journalists in South Africa agreed: "One thing about these stories is that many times

one didn't know whether to believe the horror that the victims spoke of. Not to say that they were lying, but they often seemed to be out of touch, there was a lot of fear; the fear was such that they felt that they would never be safe again" (South Africa, 5); others expressed frustration over having to speak to community leaders instead of directly to community members who may fear retribution from their community (South Africa, 8).

Other challenges raised by journalists were psychological/emotional wellbeing, physical security, intimidation and threats. In Kenya, journalist spoke of ***intimidation*** by political and corporate actors with vested interests in the media and their coverage of the elections. Similarly, journalists mentioned experiencing ***trauma*** themselves during their coverage of the 2007 elections and the Westgate attacks. While remembering their coverage of the Westgate attacks, one journalist said: "You know first I was shocked, I had never seen anything like this before, I was traumatized so when I came back to the office I just sat on my computer and just wrote what I saw" (Kenya, 2). A Kenyan journalist described their colleague receiving a call from a woman trapped inside a church that was under attack: "they stayed with this lady on the phone until her phone died. At one time she was telling them, 'Now we are being attacked'" (Kenya, 19+20), and explains the lack of attention on issue of trauma in journalists: "What does that do to you? When you get home, do you even sleep? So the issue of trauma for journalists hasn't been really handled and I think nobody has tried to handle that situation, because what do you do?" (Kenya, 19+20).

The ***security of journalists*** was of particular concern in Serbia in the coverage of the Pride Parade, where it was decided "that high-profile journalists do not go to the scene as they will be recognizable and will be the target as soon as they appear. We agreed that women would not go to the Pride but men could, who would be able to defend themselves in case of attack" (Serbia, 1). In South Africa, journalists covering protests or xenophobic attacks are seldom sent out alone. One journalist explains juggling their safety against the risks of getting a good story: "(…) one of the foremost things in your mind is to try and stay safe but at the same time put yourself in as much danger as possible to get a decent story" (South Africa, 15). Another journalist recalls covering a community protest and realising the police were firing live ammunition instead of rubber bullets (South Africa, 7). A Kenyan journalist who

worked on a terrorism story recalls being “interrogated by the Anti- Terrorism Police for twelve hours, bundled in a car and taken to Mombasa court” (Kenya, 17). Journalists with families or children were reluctant to cover the Somali conflict (Kenya, 23).

The challenge of ***time constraints*** limited journalists from following up on stories or pursuing them in greater depth, and was mostly noted by South African journalists. A South African journalist explained that they are “constantly reacting to news when you work at a daily newspaper. It’s difficult to have time to research and spend time, you know. So it was for example very black and white; it was very much like good guys and bad guys” (South Africa, 3). Time constraints in combination with difficulty accessing government officials in South Africa often resulted in tense relations. Due to tight deadlines South African journalists may go ahead and publish a story without comment from a government official and then face criticism and accusations by government that the story was “distorted” (South Africa, 10). Another journalist drew a connection between time constraints and a lack of understanding of complex issues:

> I do believe that in South Africa we have a big problem with our media and the lack of understanding. I don't think, however, that it's as simple as that. I think the lack of understanding is also fuelled by the lack of time. You know, people are cutting costs across the board so there are fewer journalists needing to push out more content, needing to push out content on multiple platforms; it's no longer just ‘I am a print journalist’. And so the pressure really is on them. (South Africa, 21)

In two cases journalists spoke of ***parachute journalism and armchair journalism***. On the coverage of the Somali conflict, a Kenyan journalist explained having to engage in desk-bound journalism as it was too dangerous to send reporters to the field (Kenya, 23). A South African journalist explained that too often when it comes to covering community-based conflicts, journalists parachute in only when there is visible conflict, failing to understand the deeper issues and reasons behind the conflict: “So I mean there are lot of facets there that sort of lead to the easy quick telephone journalism rather than being embedded on the ground and spending time with communities to really understand (…) There is no understanding of the long term sort of journey that leads to that particular point” (South Africa, 6).

In Kenya, journalists spoke about the challenge of ***protecting sources***. One journalist working on an investigation piece into corruption explains that the same sources who had given the journalist a confidential report also warned them of danger: "You see when they started cracking down on us even our sources vanished, as the report we were given, we were given in confidence. So the same sources had even realized and even told us that 'these people are coming for you'" (Kenya, 17). Another journalist had their phone calls monitored to trace their sources: "(…) one of the senior police officers called me and said 'I know so and so gave you the information, because from our records we can see that yesterday you only called this person'" (Kenya, 26).

In both Serbia and Kenya, journalists mentioned the challenge of being ***aware of information, but lacking concrete evidence to prove it or facing denial by sources***. With Milosevic's extradition, a Serbian journalist recalls the media's role in exposing corruption and proving the origin of property associated with political actors under Milosevic's regime: "You have a yacht, villa, money, but you cannot prove 80-90% of origin of that property" (Serbia, 12). In Kenya, journalists face denial of information when reporting on security issues such as conflicts with Al-Shabab and the war in Somalia, saying "the only challenge as I told you before is that this is a case of the government fighting terror and they wouldn't want some issues highlighted. (…) So you may have information but everyone is denying" (Kenya, 26).

Not speaking ***the language of a community*** you are reporting on or sharing their ***ethnic background*** posed challenges for journalists in Kenya and South Africa. In Kenya, mistrust between politicians and journalists from different communities means that newsrooms are likely to assign journalists to cover their own communities in order to facilitate access to sources and information (Kenya, 8). During the 2007 elections "(…) it reached a point where the journalists could not access some areas if you do not belong to that particular community, their thinking and the particular tribe" (Kenya, 15). In South Africa "it's absolutely essential we have reporters who speak Xhosa, who live in areas which are often affected by the service delivery protests" (South Africa, 23). Accessing sources or gaining their trust is challenged when journalists work alongside the police during coverage of protests: "(…) sometimes, especially from a TV point of view, a cameraman, in order to get the shots, must be

with the police, maybe behind the police, take shots of the police and the crowd running. So when people see you, protestors see you, they think that you are embedded within the police" (South Africa, 10).

In Serbia, reporting on a large event such as the Pride Parade posed the challenge of ***covering all aspects of the story***: "That was the key issue. How to cover every aspect of the story, who should be on duty (…) people who cover the police, the judiciary, someone who covers political affairs as well as someone doing social affairs, so that we have as many people as possible, photographers too" (Serbia, 18). One of the last challenges raised by a Kenyan journalist was the lack of ***proper safety equipment***, such as bullet-proof jackets, during coverage of conflicts, such as the Westgate attack.

4.1.3. Presenting and framing a (conflict) story

In terms of overall **goals while presenting and framing a story** on democratisation conflicts, journalists, in general, refer to common journalistic practices such as structuring information according to the *'information pyramid'*: "I filter what has been said and I take the most important issues that the people care about and I take it to the top of my piece" (Egypt, 3). Journalists highlight their aim to *offer fact-based coverage* and "to find as many documents, proof that would convince readers (…) that what we are writing is correct" (Serbia, 12). Journalists also aim at *"distilling the truth"* (Kenya, 1) and telling "what was happening" (Kenya, 19+20).

In all countries, journalists say that *giving voice to all conflict parties* and *balancing different sides of a story* are important goals. They claim to "scrutinize everything in order to have all parties' voice present, including the Muslim Brotherhood" in Egypt (Egypt, 13); "give (…) some airtime" and "audience to the other people [the opposition]" (Kenya, 19+20) in the context of elections in Kenya and "combin[e] these voices to get a credible story" (Kenya, 1).

While, in Serbia, some journalists reveal that occasionally they would not give extremist or violent conflict parties (such as Pride Parade hooligans) a voice in their reporting, the balance-norm is important also here:

> For a public service it is very important to try to find someone who is pro and someone who is contra; however, this does not mean that you should shoot someone who is able to break a gay activist's head. (…) But you will find their political stronghold. You cannot ignore, you cannot present and say "yes, these people are marginalised and have problems and we will give space only to them" because it is simply not such a society. (Serbia, 23)

In order to balance stories, a South African journalist reports that he would, wherever possible, try to "get an external analyst or expert, to give another external view on the issue" (South Africa, 2).

While several journalists claim "impartiality" (Egypt, 20; Kenya, 19+20) to be their goal while documenting the different views on a certain conflict and would try to "forget that this person is a red or white or black affiliate" (Egypt, 20); several journalists report to also take on an active part by *"editorializing"* (Kenya, 22) the different viewpoints, for example by presenting them as "extremist" or "wrong". In this context, a South African journalist points out how he treated xenophobic statements: "I had to just do what my job required of me; present their side as illogical as it might have seemed, as misguided as it was and you have to leave it to the listeners, you have to leave it out to the public to decide for themselves" (South Africa, 19). Journalists also mention that, as part of an investigative and critical approach, they seek to expose politicians by presenting unmasking statements instead of broadcasting what political parties want: "I always wanted to broadcast a politician's statement, particularly when it was at the edge of nonsense, where he made a fool of himself and where it is seen how much they babble" (Serbia, 3).

The attempt to *establish a culture of dialogue and to moderate between conflict parties* is mentioned as another central goal by various journalists. Against this background, a Serbian journalist explains why their media outlet decided to conduct and publish an interview with Milosevic's daughter:

> Although we thought Milosevic should be sent to The Hague Tribunal, that he was responsible for many things, we thought it was important to open up the dialogue and to show that the time that annihilated Serbia should be examined more seriously, deeply and more meaningfully (…) During the Milosevic regime, a huge part of the population was stigmatized, they were called foreign mercenaries, traitors, but if you want to create a modern democratic

> society, you cannot create it so that other people are still stigmatized. It did not change my opinion of these people, but it was important to establish a culture of dialogue, because without it, it would be only a matter of time when we would turn again into a populist and authoritarian government. (Serbia, 6)

Likewise, a Kenyan journalist highlights that when covering the terrorist attacks and the relationship between Kenyans and Somalis it had been agreed in the newsroom "that it be made very clear" in the coverage that terrorists "are using a version of Islam that most Muslims don't agree with" (Kenya, 22). Linked to this, journalists report on their goal to *deescalate tensions* and provide "non-sensationalist" reporting and "a critical attitude", for example when "the graffiti of hate emerged on the walls of Belgrade buildings" in the context of the Pride Parade (Serbia, 19). Similarly, a Kenyan journalist highlights that, given the "anxiety about the winner" of the 2013 elections he wanted their story to highlight the winners' positions on central problems in order to "keep the country together" and "calm things down as there was a lot of tension that time" (Kenya, 4).

Furthermore, journalists claim *offering background information and in-depth analysis* to be important while framing a story. In this sense, an Egyptian journalist reports that "if you are trying to write a deep piece you try to show the people the different candidates and what may happen if they become presidents" (Egypt, 1). In Serbia, a journalist states that in the context of the pride parade, both political and security aspects were important: "You cannot neglect that around you there are threats on the Internet to the representatives of the LGBT community, and what was important to us was to ask whether something was done about that. Does the state show the strength for such a meeting to be held" (Serbia, 17). On covering community protests, a South African journalist explains being "driven by the issues that people are trying to articulate, not some of the barbaric acts that you see on the street", trying to "portray the real issues underlying". In order to do so, they would also "try and extract the criminal elements among them that have taken advantage of genuine protests of the people" by "encouraging people to engage in these vandalism activities" (South Africa, 17). Another South African journalist points out their "passion for narrative journalism" which involves "pitch[ing] stories about the disenfranchised or the poor" and "shin[ing] the light in the dark corners" instead of "writ[ing] stories that are about middle class lifestyle issues (…)" (South Africa, 22). In this context, a South African journalist highlights the specific potential of presenting in-depth analysis in

newspapers, claiming that "the reason why newspapers are still seen as the authority (…) within media is specifically because of that ability to offer analyses and to offer greater depth which is very seldom found in other media" (South Africa, 18).

In addition, journalists mention that to a certain extent, they would also *be reflecting the overall public opinion in the country*, although this would sometimes not be in line with personal convictions. In this regard, a Serbian editor states that, while, to them, "the EU is outdated, unnecessary, bureaucratic, too expensive, at the very end of its existence", the editorial policy is different, as their own "position is below the threshold in Serbia, as the elections showed". Coverage would therefore be "in line with the majority" (Serbia, 10).[8] Another journalist points out that given the general opinion of the majority in the country in 2008, "people who would consider the possibility of Kosovo being independent (…) were not acceptable to the majority of the media in Serbia" and "were not given the opportunity to express their views" (Serbia, 13).

In this regard, another Serbian journalist reports on a dilemma when covering the pre-election parliamentary campaign of 2008. While their personal view was "that SRS [Serbian Radical Party] has never distanced itself from what they did, during the war", and they did not see a reason to expose their audience "to someone who supported war crimes" nor to "sit with war criminals and ask why you committed war crimes", in the end they decided to invite SRS mayoral candidate Aleksandar Vucic for an interview, as they would otherwise have had to pay penalties to the National Broadcasting Agency (RRA) (Serbia, 11).

In order to make the stories more attractive for their audience, journalists try to provide "rich" and *entertaining information*, not "dry" pieces "without any statement, which would contribute the piece to be much poorer" (Serbia, 8). Against this background, the goal to "try and find the *human touch point* in a story" is mentioned by a South African journalist in the context of reporting on xenophobic violence:

[8] The same editor however also mentions that "there are principles where that doesn't apply", such as recognition of Kosovo: "(…) At the cost of failing, losing all my money, ending up cleaning the streets, I will never give up on Kosovo as part of Serbia, in my paper. Even if some future government recognises Kosovo, I won't" (Serbia, 10).

> (…) there has to be some kind of enlightenment shared of emotion because that gives the human context. (…) I think the emotion of a situation where humans are involved is very important to bring across because that inoculates the story against becoming a white noise. (…) And if you are really serious about telling somebody's story or reflecting South Africa's story you have to cut through the white noise. (South Africa, 25)

Since framing stories in an interesting way obviously serves economic interests of the media outlets, journalists also describe framing techniques that directly refer to the specific target group of an outlet. A journalist of the South African *Business Day* explains their reporters' attempts to pick up "nuances of entrepreneurial spirit" when writing stories about refugee camps and undocumented foreign nationals at Lindela Repatriation Centre:

> There was a story written there where they found out that there were somebody who had tried selling, starting a business inside. (…) It does become just anecdotal, it does become a little chuckle but if you look deeper in that story it just tells you that entrepreneurship is everywhere. And that's what you would expect from the *Business Day* kind of newspaper because it delves to pick up those things. Otherwise it would be losing its readership. (South Africa, 4)

There are several **challenges** while framing a story. In terms of limits to the *so-called balance-norm*, journalists often feel able to bring out only the most important sides of a case because of time constraints and the editor's requests to both simplify and sensationalize conflicts. A Kenyan journalist points out that in the context of reporting on ICC trials the "bits of the victims and their lawyer" were removed from the scripts based on editors' instructions:

> First the argument is that we have limited time we only bring out the most important and the most important is the two sides to the case. The editors believe the twin participants, (…) they have believed that is the most important, Kenyans don't bother about the victims. And again it's more sensational to pick the defence and the prosecution. (Kenya, 24)

On the other hand, journalists also state that in cases where they apply the balance-norm and give a voice to all conflict parties, this decision might be challenged by audiences and/or authorities – an Egyptian journalist reports that the decision of their newspaper to include the opinions of the Muslim Brotherhood in their coverage led to accusations of being "biased towards the Muslim Brotherhood and the military rule"

(Egypt, 13). Similarly, two Kenyan journalists criticize that “when you push for objectivity you are viewed as a sympathizer with the opposition” (Kenya, 19+20):

> I remember one time I was codenamed Raila [Raila is the first name of Raila Odinga, the leader of the opposition who ran in the last two elections] just because I insisted that the opposition, be it the smallest party in the opposition or what, must be covered. And even when they had said nothing I insisted that we had to say something about them because it’s a campaign period and may be they don’t have the capacity. (Kenya, 19+20)

The journalist’s goal of balancing different voices is also likely to be challenged by the differing level of accessibility of the different conflict parties: Kenyan journalists would, for example, have sources in the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit but not “too many sources in Al-Shabab” (Kenya, 22). The balance-norm might also be considered problematic when it comes to the question of *whether or not to include voices that are (possibly) inciting violence*. A Kenyan journalist describes the challenge of “covering politicians who had a very acerbic tongue” as follows:

> There were such debates as do we cover them or not, because if you also don’t cover them they would say the media has been pocketed and not covering this side of the political divide. And I think you come to a conclusion based on what the speaker said. In whatever the conversation, was there something substantive, newsworthy or he was just attacking the other guy, or community? But if he was engaging in an issue based argument or debate, you cover it. (Kenya, 9)

In this context, journalists also criticise the lack of control in vernacular stations where “at even live times” community leaders “can say what they want” while “in national television if you’re seen drifting from what is expected of you, you are shut down or they go for a commercial break” (Kenya, 10). Journalists also say that editors instruct them not to tell inciting stories that might “open old wounds”, such as in the case of post-election violence in 2007:

> I remember even requesting to go to the areas that were affected by the violence to spend time there and talk to victims, then you are told you will incite people. There was that feeling that if you bring in so much the voice of the victims, we are inciting Kenyans, we are going back there. (…) there was a hidden hand to say ‘kill those voices’. ‘We don’t want to open the wounds; it is over.’ (Kenya, 24)

Linked to this, journalists in Kenya also reflect on the challenge of *choosing the right words and accurate descriptions of actors and situation*. A Kenyan journalist stresses the necessity not to use “war-lords”, “war-kings” for ICC indictees, as “the choice of words puts you in the negative or the positive” and “they are still suspects yet to be convicted” (Kenya, 10). Another journalist reports that a sub-editor referred to five “Maasai herdsmen” when five Maasai got arrested, although “one of these people was a professor based in the USA” (Kenya, 22). Another journalist states that instead of using the word “terrorists” right after attacks, they would in most cases rather use “gunmen” and “suspected terrorists” (Kenya, 26).

An additional challenge while framing stories is *linked to the journalists’ relationship with and level of (in)dependence from their sources or the actors they are quoting*. A Kenyan journalist refers to the pressure arising from the dilemma that “people want you to say certain things in their favour” and “if you write things that are not in the interest of that source twice who will you talk to next. (…) With their quote you have to be careful because next time they will not talk to you” (Kenya, 8). Another Kenyan journalist adds that being ‘objective’ while having to protect one’s sources is not very likely, the more so when there is corruption: “(…) most of the journalists are poorly paid so they tend to protect their sources especially the police or military they can be getting few tips from them. And this takes away the issue of objectivity, the issues of exposing” (Kenya, 6).

Furthermore, journalists deal with the challenge of *having empathy for victims or having to deal with personal trauma while framing conflict stories*. A South African journalist confesses that feeling “a certain compassion (…) for people’s plights (…) does inform your thinking on that” (South Africa, 2). Likewise, a Kenyan journalist points out that “seeing the bodies in the morgue, the way they were shot (…) the victims with whom you could even sympathize” triggered “empathy” that influenced professional distance while reporting on the Westgate attacks (Kenya, 11). Also in relation to the Westgate attack, a Kenyan journalist confesses that their trauma may have led to instant reporting driven by immediacy and possibly leading to ignore additional sources: “I was shocked, I had never seen anything like this before, I was traumatized so when I came back to the office I just sat on my computer and just wrote what I saw” (Kenya, 2).

Journalists also reflect on the challenge of how to *deal with un-attributable information when framing conflicts* – since "so much information from different sources (…) isn't attributable, it's information where you can't quote anybody but it's true, it's verified" (Kenya, 13). A Kenyan journalist states that for the "case of the government fighting terror" governmental sources "wouldn't want some issues highlighted", leading to the situation that "you may have information but everyone is denying"– this obviously puts the journalist into a dilemma as "in journalism you can't just say something; you must say who said it, to your readers that you confirmed it" (Kenya, 26).

Finally, given the journalistic working realities already described for the selection process, it is not surprising that c*onstraints within the newsroom as well as interference from external sources* are an intervening factor while framing a story.[9] In this context, *legal provisions*, such as the rule obliging Serbian (broadcast) media to "broadcast all parties participating in the electoral process" challenge the way a story is possibly being framed (Serbia, 17).[10]

An Egyptian journalist refers to more or less direct *censorship* concerning the Maspero incidents as "the newspaper rejected the formulation of the article in which I said that the military ran over the protesters (...) and it was written a 'third party'"; supposing that "this was through a phone call by a representative of the ministry of interior" (Egypt, 14). Similarly, journalists in Kenya mention that external actors would interfere through their confidants working in the newsroom:

> There are cases when I file a story and there is an interest up there and the story comes in and you are called, 'why did you do this story, what's your interest or stake in it?' Whenever I hear those questions, I know somebody somewhere is touched by my story and it's not going to be published or when

[9] We will further elaborate on constraints within the newsroom as well as interference from external sources in a future paper on working conditions.

[10] The two Serbian public services (Radio Television of Serbia and Radio Television of Vojvodina) are obliged to ensure consistent and equal, free of charge, broadcast of all political parties participating in the elections. Commercial radio and TV stations have the right to decide on their own whether they will broadcast the news about the elections, but if they decide to do that for free, they are obliged to equally and without discrimination broadcast all parties and candidates. If commercial stations decide to broadcast paid political advertisements and other promotional material, they must respect the rule of equal representation of all parties and their candidates (see: Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, 2012).

> published it will not be what I had anticipated. Because these people have their friends in the media and they ensure they have them at the top so that when you file a story they have someone to gate-keep the story. (Kenya, 10)

Within the newsroom, journalists' individual framing preferences are thus also challenged by the *editorial policy and peers within the newsroom.* As a Serbian editor points out for their media outlet: "The editorial policy is 'Kosovo is Serbia'. It will never be any other way" (Serbia, 10). Especially in Kenya, journalists point to the fact that "the community issue", i.e. diverse ethnic backgrounds of the colleagues working in the newsroom also intervene when filing a story: "I'm a Luo, another is from another tribe, the president's tribe, the deputy president's tribe. So when you file a story, he comes in [and says] 'you cannot hit my person [people] like this'" (Kenya, 10).

Against this background, several journalists mention that, being aware of all possible means of interference, they are tempted to *censor themselves* in order to get their stories published: "Myself I faced numerous struggles. I was trying to balance the issues such as this topic should be published in the first page. (…) I was afraid about the idea of not being published (…) It is all about the censor; the censor within the journalist himself/herself" (Egypt, 9).

Journalists also reflect on their **responsibility** while filing a story, given possible consequences of framing stories in a certain way. As a South African journalist puts it, "you need to ask yourself whether or not you're going to report on things in such a way that you're able to look at yourself in the mirror" (South Africa, 15). Journalists also reflect on *whether or when to "tone down" certain topics and voices versus showing something in its full horror and* discuss the possibility of self-censorship concerning pictures of violence and victims. Journalists in South Africa, for example, reflect on their responsibility while filing stories on xenophobic attacks. One journalist reports on an incident where the editor subtly suggested to "tone down" the voices of the victims while the journalist insisted on publishing them:

> The editor was very uncomfortable by some of the very strong opinions from foreign nationals about South Africans. They said, 'I hate your country'. Like 'people in the township are animals'. The editor asked me, she said 'I am very uncomfortable to publish this because it feels like hate speech'. And I said well, I am not prepared to tone them down because people have been killed

> because they were hated. (…) They were killed because they were 'other'. (…) in the end we did run it. And people were very outraged by it. (South Africa, 9)

Another journalist reports that after their newspaper received "a flood of outraged letters" after they "chose to put the picture of (…) the Mozambican who was burned in Gauteng, on the front page", they took the unusual step of writing a leader explaining the decision and explaining that "sometimes you have to show something in its full horror" in order "to understand its importance" (South Africa, 14). By contrast, another journalist highlights the *risk of sensationalisation* in the context of xenophobic violence, pointing out that, while people were applauding them for having selected a "photo of the dead guys in the back of the van", he was wondering afterwards whether or not he was "fermenting sensations" and "adding to the severity of this situation by just going after the blood and the gore" (South Africa, 15).

A Kenyan journalist points to the responsibility *of being sensitive towards the victims' families* when showing pictures of dead bodies, arguing that while publishing a picture of a "body that had been so burnt, you couldn't recognize who it was" appears ethical to them, they would refuse to use pictures of someone who is still recognizable after being "stabbed or shot or their head is blown away" or "killed by a machete" (Kenya, 14).

In addition, as mentioned already in the section on challenges, reflections on the journalist's responsibility while framing stories in a certain way centre around a *responsible choice of words*. Journalists in Egypt state that they would not adopt negative descriptions and evaluations of different conflict actors used by their opponents ("when someone sends me a statement (…) [which] contains strong sentences such as 'the defeatists in the Ministry Of Foreign Affairs' we as a newspaper cannot say that the ministry of interior is defeatist"(Egypt, 10), until the accusations have been proven (Egypt, 12).

In addition, journalists in Kenya and South Africa stress the necessity to be sensible when it comes to *disclosing the ethnicity or nationality of conflict actors*, especially in the context of ethnic tensions and xenophobic attacks. In Kenya, journalists state that names do not "need to be written down" because "your name places you. If you have a name with an O at the beginning then the country knows I'm Luo" (Kenya, 19+20).

Another Kenyan journalist stresses that they would not give the offender's ethnic background when reporting on "houses being burnt" or "women being raped" as "there is no politics involved. It is desperate poor people losing control" (Kenya, 14). In South Africa, one journalist criticizes that "there's very little critical engagement" on whether it is "okay to out someone's nationality in a headline when there is already xenophobia": "(…) you know, if you or I commit robbery, it's not gonna say (…) 'coloured woman commits robbery or Jewish woman commits robbery' (…). But it's totally fine to go and say 'Malawian man commits robbery' (…). And I don't think it's always conscious but for me in a way that's more dangerous" (South Africa, 22). Another South African journalist reports that they "have taken a conscious decision at SABC newsroom", that they would mention the nationality of delinquents only if it is "absolute", i.e. directly linked to the crime (South Africa, 10). Against this background, another South African journalist claims that there needs to be more critical reflection on the journalists' own "class and race bias": "(…) it's affecting how we construct narratives around our country and it's affecting how we understand our country and what we reflect is going right or wrong in our country" (South Africa, 6).

4.2. Journalistic role perceptions

The analysis of journalist's reflections on their professional role perceptions (during democratisation conflicts) shows various **general characteristics**. They differ (1) with regard to whether they have an *active or passive ("neutral") understanding* of their role as journalists, i.e. whether they define themselves as agents or as transmitters or moderators of public discourse. Although an active understanding could be observed in Egypt, Kenya and South Africa, it seems to be particularly important in Serbia. The active or passive understanding of the journalistic profession is (2) linked to how the interviewees perceive their *impact as a journalist* and of media in general: "You have a paper, sells 250,000 copies, 340,000 at one point. When you think about it, every day you are talking to a great mass, a politician can't assemble 20. (…) It's a great influence" (Serbia, 9). (3) Journalist's reflections also differ in the sense of whether they would rather focus on *their individual role perceptions* ("I always try to" – South Africa, 18; "as a journalist, I needed to" – Kenya, 1; "my role was to" – Serbia, 7) or present roles that media in general or *journalists as a collective/profession* should adhere to ("the role of the media is to

offer" – South Africa, 18; "our main role is to" – South Africa, 25). Moreover, journalists (4) also reflect on possible *limits for the applicability of their role perceptions*, (5) varying *role perceptions dependent on different positions* within the newsrooms (e.g. reporters vs. editors), different journalistic roles in different *types of media* (e.g. daily vs. weekly, public vs. private media) as well as (6) role perceptions *changing over time* in the context of shifting (historical, geopolitical or economical) circumstances. (7) While some journalists focus on *concrete means* of their perceived roles, others reflect on *overall aims*.

Based on the interview data from the four countries, one can distinguish different **roles** that journalists perceive to be guiding their work. Before we introduce and describe them, it is however important to note that these roles cannot be separated distinctively from one another as they are interlinked in manifold ways. Furthermore, one journalist might adhere to more than one role while reporting on one specific conflict. For the sake of analytical clarity, however, we will focus on these different roles respectively.

Acting as an ***'informer',*** producing factual stories and providing information of public interest has been described as the classic, basic role of modern journalism around the world (Christians et al., 2009; Hanitzsch et al., 2011) and is cited as one relevant journalistic role by the interviewees in their media coverage of conflicts (Vladisavljević and Voltmer, 2016). It is therefore not surprising that this role is also mentioned in the majority of the conducted interviews – with journalists describing themselves as a "conveyer belt**,** giving information to the public" (Kenya, 21), "writ[ing], sourc[ing] for and produc[ing] factual stories" (Kenya, 1), and giving "the most precise and accurate picture of what is happening" (Serbia, 13): "I think my role as a journalist [is to] go out there, get information, select it, of course, based on its newsworthiness, package it, and put it on air" (South Africa, 10).

However, the perceived importance of the informative role seems to vary, depending on country and conflict type. In Egypt, the monitorial role is mentioned in 7 interviews (out of 12 interviews in which role perceptions are discussed), in Kenya, it is cited in 12 interviews (out of 23 interviews which mention role perceptions). In Serbia 8 out of

25 interviewees mention the informative role in their reflections on journalistic roles as well as 8 out of 22 South African interviewees.

The reflections on the informative role intervene with different ideas of 'objectivity', as both 'constructivist' and 'objectivist' approaches to this concept and the idea of a 'detached observer' can be found in the interviewee's answers. In this context, Egyptian journalists stress that they seek to "cover the complete event" (Egypt, 10), to "reflect the true picture" and to "convey very objectively from the source" (Egypt, 3). A rather 'objectivist' understanding of the informative role is also mirrored in this quote by a South African interviewee: "[I] write for my readers to bring them the truth. (…) It's my job to tell a story. I tell it as it is" (South Africa, 1).

Egyptian journalists reflect on the challenges of balancing, with most being confident at achieving a reasonable compromise between "objective" information and their personal political alignments. While some claim not to have any ideological affiliations, being "only affiliated with [their] job" (Egypt, 3), one journalist puts their approach this way – representing a rather active understanding of 'monitoring': "When talking about political directions, it is my right to choose, but when I deprive you of information then this is wrong. There are many ways to reach this compromise that does not harm your political direction and at the same time it protects the other and his right to exist" (Egypt, 6).

In the Kenyan context, the monitorial role is being linked to other roles such as 'educating the audience' as well as 'being an agent for social change'. One Kenyan interviewee would like their reporting on the Westgate bombings and terrorism in Kenya to enhance "civilian vigilance" (Kenya, 7). However, this approach increases risk that vigilance turns into fear and persecution of the Somali community more generally:

> I feel satisfied if we can highlight the manner in which the attacks were executed. A story that would capture the movement of these people, how they came as refugees, etc., so that people get to know that each person is potentially a terrorist. We got recommendation from the police saying that the manner in which we've covered our stories contributed a lot to the way the public were sharing information with the police. Because if we capture a story well how one moved from one place to another and how he used to behave,

> Kenyans get to know that a terrorist isn't just one violent outspoken person. (Kenya, 26)

We will elaborate on this role below, but Kenyan journalists also mention limitations to their informative role in relation to other roles such as being agents for peace:

> My role is to give the correct information as much as possible, at times it's difficult though. To be sensitive to those identities, religious, ethnic, because it's in the *Nation* policy. And also be moderate, not cause alarm, fear and also not hide the information but package it well. Also check on what to release, because some things you can't release. So my role is to release the correct information but also not to cause alarm. (Kenya, 22)

Serbian journalists highlight the basic importance of the informative role in the early stages of transition, especially during the arrest and extradition of former president Slobodan Milosevic to the ICTY: "(…) the 'B92' played a tremendously important informative role as it reported about many things about which other media (…) reported with serious reserve and to a much lesser extent" (Serbia, 8). Another Serbian journalist emphasizes the importance of the role still today: "When people have more information then you act enlightening (…) I think most people in this country do not have enough information and take positions on the basis of false information" (Serbia, 13).

South African journalists also stress the importance of the informative role for democracy and coverage on conflicts:

> (…) in a democratic society, citizens have got a right to information in order to make informed decisions. All that we do is to give them information – 'this is what is happening', it's up to you to make up your mind. (South Africa, 10)

> (…) our main role is to reflect society back at itself, to try as far as we can to get to the truth of the matter even if the truth is murky or fuzzy to be honest that the truth seems murky or fuzzy. (…) I don't think one can choose not to cover a service delivery protest because one fears that one's presence might escalate that service delivery protest. (South Africa, 25)

The ***analytical role*** is very closely linked to the informative role. It is, however, not mentioned very often in the interviews (2 Kenyan, 3 Serbian and 4 South African interviews). Interviewees highlight the importance of "put[ing] information in the context" (Serbia, 16), "reconstruct[ing] the entire event and "giv[ing] historical and

surrounding and future forecasts" (Serbia, 22), or offering a "fresh point of view (…) checking facts and providing background information" (Kenya 14).

The importance of analysis is also reflected with regard to *conflicts*. One Serbian interviewee describes their approach to covering the Serbian integration into the EU as follows: "Maybe my pro-European stance is stronger than my anti-European stance, but that does not mean that I should agitate for Europe and say 'Europe is our only chance'. (…) those who think it is not good also need to be heard, there has to be this kind of a balance" (Serbia, 13).

In relation to "Black South Africans turning on black foreigners" during the xenophobic attacks, one South African interviewee points out that "the why beyond the attack was the most important question" (South Africa, 5); another South African journalist reflects on their analytical approach when reporting on community protests: "(…) some people would (…) only see what was most obvious. You know the burning tires and the like. They wouldn't delve deep enough or look for what was behind the curtain. So, I always try to offer a deeper understanding of what his thing was all about" (South Africa, 18).

Journalists also reflect on the significance of the analytic and interpretive role, with regard to *different media surroundings*. On the coverage of the ICC prosecution of Kenyatta and Ruto, one Kenyan journalist points out that, in times of internet, the court case had been "streamed online, so anyone who wanted to view it would listen to every minute of it from beginning to end". Traditional media was hence "reduced to commenting on what everyone had already seen" (Kenya, 14). One Serbian interviewee claims the analytical role to be particularly important for weeklies: "In a weekly you have to reconstruct the entire event and to give historical and surrounding and future forecasts. (…) That is a job that demands a lot of intellectual effort, digging through the papers and documents. (…) we reconstruct it from a certain distance and in a certain width which dailies do not have" (Serbia, 22).

Another role that appears in the interviews is the ***entertaining role***. It is, however, explicitly mentioned only in one Egyptian interview, two Kenyan interviews and one South African Interview. Journalists would always connect it with other role

descriptions, such as a “human story telling role” (South Africa, 25), or education: “I want to entertain the viewer by discussing topics that he would be interested in and that would add to his knowledge. Hence, it is educative or knowledgeable entertainment” (Egypt, 22).

Theoretical conceptualisations as well as empirical studies mention the ‘radical role’ which challenges political authority and holds power to account (e.g. Christians et al., 2009). This role is also referred to by the journalists in our sample when they speak of their investigative and watchdog roles. Taking over the role of an ***investigator***, doing “proper investigations” (Kenya, 1), bringing up stories and “topics which nobody wants to initiate” (Serbia, 3) and “highlighting the fractures and failures” (South Africa, 6), is mentioned as a journalistic task in two Kenyan interviews, five Serbian interviews and five South African interviews (but no Egyptian interviews). A Serbian journalist describes their investigative role on the coverage of the Pride Parade like this: “To research who is guilty for the conflict (…) to point to the need of holding the Pride and what it should mean” (Serbia, 2). Serbian journalists also reflect on the fact that there had been limits to investigative journalism before and during early stages of transition. Some journalists point out that being close to or even friends with the new leaders they wanted to protect them and their political goals by not reporting too critically from the beginning. In addition, the limits to investigative journalism can also be related to the fact that various media outlets were (and still are) in partial ownership of the state:

> [I] think that the *Novosti* in that period did not question and challenge the political authorities. We were informed to a certain extent, but they were not ready for that approach of questioning where we would explain in fact ideological, psychological and all other motives for action of the then political actors in Serbia. (Serbia, 5)

The investigative role is closely linked to the ***watchdog role*** as this quote from a South African interview shows, referring to coverage of the xenophobic attacks: “(…) when the government was building the so called refugee camps and whatever mess was happening in there we were able to show and also condemn the government for failing to deal appropriately, for being slow in reacting to things, for being not adequate” (South Africa, 4).

Acting as a watchdog, who has an “oversight role” and “at times arise[s] above the government and militia” (Kenya, 11) in order to “hold those people [authorities] accountable” (South Africa, 12) and thus acts as a kind of “fourth estate” (Kenya, 5) is mentioned in seven Kenyan interviews, six Serbian interviews, three South African Interviews and one Egyptian interview. According to one Kenyan journalist the watchdog role consists of highlighting governmental action, both negatively and positively (Kenya, 26). On the contrary, a Serbian journalist understands the role to be constantly critical: “My role was to present the candidates in the light which they will not like. To ask them the most unpleasant questions possible” (Serbia, 7). An Egyptian journalist describes the watchdog role in a similar way: “The lesson learned is that regardless who is in power whether Mubarak, Morsi or Abdel Fatah El Sisi; there is always something to criticize” (Egypt, 9).

Journalists also reflect on possibilities and limitations of watchdog journalism during different phases of transition and democratisation. In this context, a Serbian journalist mentions that there was a good period for watchdog journalism in their news magazine *Vreme* and in Serbia in general in the early 2000s:

> We were not gentle either to the government or to the opposition. At that time, we believed there was an opened space in our public life where party affiliation and relationships of government-opposition lost its significance, where democratisation, modernisation of the state, EU and all standards for which we fought for in the nineties were important. When the government deviated from these standards, we had to speak loud and clear. Especially when we talked about the nineties, war crimes, and relations with paramilitary organizations that operated during the nineties. (…) We were critical to the SPS and the Radicals, because we did not want to allow their long-period government to get pushed under the carpet, to forget the abuse of wars and calamities. We treated these people critically. From this perspective, it was a pretty good period for journalism in Serbia. (Serbia, 6)

Referring to the same historic period, another journalist points out that the watchdog role may have been misinterpreted in the past: “(..) [I]n a desire that Milosevic’s system never repeats (...) we literally maltreated the then government. We did not give them chance in many things to show what they can, what they know, what they want, but we were cutting them like instantly” (Serbia, 8).

Another general journalistic role mentioned in theoretical conceptualisations as well as empirical studies is the ‘facilitator’ which appeared as the most desirable one in

the MeCoDEM content analysis (Vladisavljević and Voltmer, 2016). This role is also referred to by the journalists in our sample, as they mention acting as a teacher, moderator and agent for social change. The role of a ***teacher*** is mentioned in two Egyptian, two Kenyan, two Serbian and seven South African interviews. The focus in the interviewee's description of their educative role varies from simply explaining information to truly enlightening people's mind-sets, thus involving different levels of normativity. A Kenyan journalist describes their educative role in the context of the coverage of the ICC prosecution of President Kenyatta as giving background factual information on the ICC (Kenya, 24). South African journalists also highlight the role of newspapers in "explaining to the readership the complexity of the society in which they live. (…) Newspapers should be careful not sort of affirming or building existing stereotypes but newspapers need to still unpack these things" (South Africa, 11).

An Egyptian journalist describes their role to be not only explanatory but "enlightening" when covering the post-revolutionary elections in their country: "My goal is that you assist in enlightening the people to allow that the coming president is to be representative of them and the revolution that they made" (Egypt, 4). A truly enlightening role is also mentioned by a South African interviewee who describes their aim to foster education of a specific group of citizens, perceived to be living in a "suburban bubble" in Cape Town: "(…) I think I've always seen my role as a journalist as exposing people to stories they are uncomfortable engaging with" (South Africa, 22). Similarly, a South African journalist working for Radio Islam mentions that their educational goal is to break down a "conservative mind-set" and a "narrow mindedness" among their audience: "(…) try and open people's minds up to the realities of what's happening. And change their mind-sets of what's happening and to start begin accepting what's happening around the world especially in South Africa (…) hit them with the reality" (South Africa, 24).

Although it is not mentioned explicitly in many interviews, some journalists do also adhere to the model of "discursive journalism" (Brosda, 2008), perceiving their role to act as a ***moderator*** of public debate. One Egyptian journalist puts it this way: "My political goals are to keep society warm and part of the discussion, asking why, when and how. The media provides this opportunity of including everyone in the discussion. It allows for a kind of survey, referendum and engagement" (Egypt, 22). A

South African journalist describes their discursive role during the xenophobic attacks as follows: "(…) for me my role was to inform and to get people talking and to start the debate, you know. Even if it doesn't directly, especially with the xenophobia, even if it doesn't directly impact on your life" (South Africa, 2).

As part of the facilitator role, journalists do not only strive to be a teacher and a moderator but to act as an ***agent for social change***: 4 Egyptian, 3 Kenyan, 10 Serbian, and 6 South African interviewees explicitly mention that they want to "capture the voices of voiceless" (South Africa, 7), "protect certain values "(Serbia, 18), "have an impact" (South Africa, 7), "effect change" (South Africa, 12) or even "lead the process of change" (Egypt, 24). Journalists in this context reflect on a genuinely active approach in their work and in specific media outlets:

> (…) The thing I have is to write words. [This] is what I can do. If I was a cop I would arrest bad people. So that would be my tool. I think we write because we (…) wanna change something. (South Africa, 9)
>
> (…) the role of the B92 has never been only reporting but also active. (…) there is no doubt that there is a social engagement. (Serbia, 1)

The role of an agent for social change is considered relevant in different conflicts and periods of transition. Some Serbian journalists, for example, highlight their aim to counteract conservative attitudes in society (expressed by movements and associations such as Dveri, Obraz, SNP Nasi, 1389, Orthodox Church etc.) in their coverage of the Pride Parade: "(…) it was a participation in fight for rights; my writing was very engaged both before and after the Pride. (…) I always write with an attitude. Sometimes it is openly visible and sometimes the attitude is the way in which I chose collocutors, topic, put the title" (Serbia, 2).

Some Serbian journalists also describe themselves as fighters for democratisation and leaders in the process of coming to terms with the authoritarian past, as becomes evident in the following statement (which at the same time refers to the watchdog role, see above): "At that time, we believed there was an opened space in our public life (…) where democratisation, modernisation of the state, EU and all standards for which we fought for in the nineties were important. When the government deviated from these standards, we had to speak loud and clear" (Serbia,

6). In Egypt, journalists also focus on the role of journalists as agents for change in the political context as they claim to “demand the rule of law and its implementation” (Egypt, 21) and mention their aim to “influence the decision-makers to create legislations” (Egypt, 20) and to “respond to our needs, because unfortunately in our country decisions come from above” (Egypt, 21). Talking about their role when reporting on Islamist terrorism in Kenya, a Muslim journalist highlights the goal to convince “Mainstream Muslim leaders and opinion shapers” to “show leadership on this matter by attack[ing] this stupid ideology of those who engage in terrorist attacks in the name of Islam” (Kenya, 4). In South Africa, journalists reflect on their activist role in the context of xenophobic attacks and the treatment of refugees in the country, claiming that by reporting on governmental failures “we were kind of able to make sure that the lives of the people who ended up in those refugee camps are taken care of better (…)” (South Africa, 4).

Journalists also reflect on the chances to be successful in achieving true change within their newsroom and in the audience’s mind:

> (…) the challenge was to come to the newspaper that had previously been very conservative and nationalistically defined under the chief editor (…) The idea of the political leadership back at that time was to enter into the Europeanization and I have used that to get into some kind of fight with readers of ‘Politika’. (…) I wrote my articles aware I was addressing the people who did not support it. (…) that was a kind of encouragement, to rub noses to the majority of our audience (…) and make some of them to think if they would not want to change their minds. (Serbia, 20)

Finally, another role detected in the interviews can be summarized with the term **‘*agent for peace*’:** The journalistic task to “keep (...) the country together” (Kenya, 4) and transmit a “message [of] tolerance, coexistence [and] peace” (Serbia, 3) seems to be particularly important in Kenya (mentioned in 9 Interviews) but is also mentioned in Serbia (3 interviews), South Africa (2 interviews) and Egypt (3 interviews). In Egypt, journalists describe their role and behaviour as protecting the stability of the country as well as peace between religious groups: “I can write about anything that aims at achieving stability at that time. Also, I hope to avoid the use of Muslims and Copts and only think about the Egyptian citizen without classifying them based on religion” (Egypt, 7). Some Serbian journalists mention their role to “transmit

a (…) message (…) [of] tolerance, coexistence, peace" (Serbia, 3) with regard to the Kosovo question and the Pride Parade, also reflecting their potential impact:

> My role was to decrease the tensions in public opinion, which was very critically, hostilely and very aggressively oriented towards the members of the LGBT population (…) You always have that phrase, if I influenced at least one hooligan not to go on the street, I am happy. Although I doubt that I influenced some hooligan not to go, while on the other hand maybe I influenced some young person, who was not under the influence of the hooligans' leader, to remain in his flat and not to take a stone in his hands. (Serbia, 19)

Reflecting the overall peace narrative which dominated the election process in 2013 and given the ethnic tensions in the country (see: Neverla et al., 2015 for a review of empirical research in this regard), journalists in Kenya also highlight the pacifying role in their answers, stressing that they were on a "civilizing mission" (Kenya, 23), being "very sensitive about communities" (Kenya, 1) and their overall goal was "not to incite (…) so that they don't use my story as the basis for any fights or any violence" (Kenya, 1). To fulfil this role, journalists mention they would in some circumstances also "self-censor" (Kenya, 3) by not reporting (live) on every event and every statement:

> (…) it was very important that (…) we don't air any inflammatory remarks. And a lot of that was recorded because politicians are a bit careless and reckless at times, but we would always make sure that it doesn't go to the wider public.(…) we didn't even have live broadcast to cover events because we already knew the tones of the rallies or the meetings. (Kenya, 18)

While as agents for peace journalists would sometimes support governmental goals of (national) stability, the *collaborative role,* which promotes working with the government in order to advance goals such as stability, economic development and institution building, is not mentioned explicitly by journalists in the sample. This obviously reflects the fact that, although journalistic coverage in reality often reflects official positions, obvious collaboration with the state and authorities contradicts the perceived norm of journalistic independence. Thus, the collaborative role was evaluated negatively also in the media coverage in the four MeCoDEM countries (Vladisavljević and Voltmer, 2016).

In summary, the roles described by the journalists in the four countries, reflect but also extend and concretize overall concepts that have been detected in literature (Christians et al., 2009; Hanitzsch et al., 2011; Neverla et al., 2015) and also in the MeCoDEM content analysis (Vladisavljević and Voltmer, 2016). While the interviewed journalists do highlight the role of the informer, they also see themselves as watchdogs, facilitators of social change and as agents for peace – roles which apply to different degrees depending on the individual journalists, media outlets, media types, countries and conflicts.

4.3. Ethical orientations

4.3.1. Values and principles guiding reporting

Ethics form a vital component of journalism as a profession. Our study explored the values and guiding principles which influence journalists during conflict coverage, which refers to but is not limited to investigating whether journalists are aware of ethical codes of conduct, how they apply these ethical guidelines to their work, their understanding of ethical reporting and whether there were any specific ethical considerations and dilemmas in relation to the conflicts they reported on and how the journalist handled these. Across all four countries *journalists share a collective commitment to a set of professionally prescribed ethical principles, with variation in how these principles are understood and applied within specific conflicts or country contexts*. As such, at the onset of our study, we expected that journalists may refer to ethical principles such as objectivity, impartiality, diversity, truthfulness, accuracy, accountability, limitation of harm and protection of human dignity and privacy. Indeed, these as well as others emerged as the most prominent ethical benchmarks guiding journalists, albeit varying in definition.

Some of the key values and principles raised by journalists can be understood as inherently ‘western’-motivated ethical guidelines, however adapted and contested by local conditions: Objectivity, and challenges around its attainability; Truthfulness, and commitment to unearthing the ‘truth’; Balance/fairness/neutrality, credibility/integrity, independence, accuracy and quality. By extension, two journalists also spoke of their “ethical” obligation (or role) to humanise conflict and be the ‘voice of the voiceless’.

Objectivity was defined, adjusted, maintained and challenged by journalists in various ways across the four countries, owing to the countries/conditions in which they operate and the conflicts they cover. To be objective was to allow all sides of the story to be communicated; maintain distance and remove one's voice/opinion from the story; report 'facts' and avoid unofficial sources seen to be inciting violence; include ethnically, racially, religiously diverse sources; build politically diverse newsrooms and assign journalists to cover stories in opposition to their own political convictions. Despite efforts to maintain objectivity, journalists also argued that on many accounts objectivity was not realistic or attainable, with several examples where personal/political convictions influenced reporting and editorial decisions. In some cases, objectivity was in fact challenged by journalists as unconducive and detrimental to the conflict they were reporting.

Coverage of the ICC trials and the elections required particular emphasis on ***sticking to the facts*** and avoiding sources or information which could be misunderstood and "serve to incite the public unnecessarily" (Kenya 18). In an effort to ensure that Kenya's 2013 elections remain as conflict-free as possible, journalists emphasised the importance of *giving all political parties and actors equal access* to the media, even affording them equal on-air time: "It was always very important to have all players represented in the story (…) Also on an almost equal amount of time" (Kenya, 18).

For one South African journalist, reporting in a balanced way means ***accessing both the voices of those protesting and those in government***: "You talk to all the parties. (…) So you would not just have the three people taking part in the protest action voice but you will hear everybody's voice" (South Africa, 1).

Regardless of a journalist's political orientation, ***removing political/tribal bias from reporting was fundamental in exercising objectivity***. Although political parallelism was noted by journalists in Egypt, and political interference was a source of self-censorship in Kenya, on a professional/ethical level some journalists asserted the importance of keeping their political ideologies "completely separated" from their reporting (Egypt, 16), not in the least as something they owe to the public: "On the

outside, the people have the right to receive the information" (Egypt, 16). The following responses capture these observations:

> My professional standards are more important than my political ones. I am neither against politicized people nor political journalists with certain ideologies. (…) Everyone is free. However, I am against the idea of reflecting his ideology in his work and being biased toward this ideology at the expense of his work. (Egypt, 8)

> I pride myself in the fact that I am not very popular among the DA (Democratic Alliance) and I am not very popular among the ANC (African National Congress) people. So for me that's an assessment that I am doing something right. (South Africa, 2)

Diversifying newsrooms with journalists who hold different political convictions was seen as key to minimising politically biased reporting. During the 2008 conflict in Serbia, there was some partisanship present in the newsrooms, but for the most part, journalists worked on stories that were in opposition to their political convictions: "In our office the people who do not support some political option were to cover it. It was not a rule, it just happened like that" (Serbia, 5).

The ***extent to which objectivity was attainable and in some cases conducive to their reporting was challenged***. Many journalists openly claimed they were 'human first, then journalist' and asserted the influence their political, ethnic, national, religious, racial or personal (moral) bias has had on their reporting and editorial decision: "all journalists are humans before we're journalists and we all hold strong views" (South Africa, 20). A Serbian journalist explains:

> Of course, every man looks through his own eyes. And his eyes are a product of his upbringing and his socialization and culture. This is something that every journalist always carries with himself; he cannot get away from it, no matter how hard he tries to create things in different ways. What he holds inside him has to paint all these things, and it becomes evident one way or another. (Serbia, 18)

Journalists from all four countries shared instances where their biases were present. Additionally, some journalists illustrated cases where their personal values and orientations were consciously applied to their coverage or editorial decisions. These are exemplified in the following section.

In Egypt, journalists explained that the direction of *political bias* will emerge depending on the political orientation of the journalist as well as the newspaper they work for, challenging the notion of absolute objectivity or existence of neutral media:

> It would not have been possible to think that I would have allowed the publication of anything against the current president, and I am in support of him. I could never have allowed that any criticism is directed at the armed forces. These are my biases. But I could have allowed the criticism of the Muslim Brotherhood. There is no fair or just media or neutral media. (Egypt, 5)
>
> Opposite to what many think that there is one hundred percent objective journalism, this is non-existent. If we have four newspapers covering the same events, you can call these people 'revolutionaries', while I can call them 'rebels'. You can say that this attack is a 'terrorist' attack while I can call it 'an act of martyrdom'. This depends on your own political makeup and the policy of the paper. (Egypt, 24)

In Kenya, journalists' ***ethnic/tribal background*** and by extension their affiliation or favouritism for political parties or actors who share their ethnic/tribal background has challenged journalists' ability to remove political bias from their reporting:

> (…) when I cover a function and it is an opposition function I find myself very restrained on how to write about certain things. The same happens when am covering a function of the government because I voted for them. How do I become objective about it and not to insert my personal stuff there? (Kenya, 7)

In some cases, insisting on objectivity by pushing for equal coverage for all political parties was perceived as sympathizing with the opposition (Kenya, 19), while in South Africa, "people who are loyal to the ethics of journalism have been portrayed as people who are not loyal to transformation" (South Africa, 22). Similarly, journalists who in their coverage show sympathy towards victims of xenophobic violence are seen as "taking sides" and risk losing credibility (South Africa, 24).

Nationalist, moral, racial and religious biases also factored into journalists' coverage of Kosovo's declaration of independence, the Pride Parade and the June 30th revolution which ousted President Mohamed Morsi. A Serbian editor's nationalist and moral views guided their decisions on how they reported the EU-Kosovo debate in 2008 and the Pride Parade in 2010:

> I made that famous cover in 2008, 'Fuck off', the day Kosovo proclaimed the so-called independence. (…) That's my position! Kosovo is Serbia! The end! And I am ignoring the gay parade for the reason of the mental hygiene of the nation. (…) I think it's bad for a nation to promote those values that are – and that's my personal position – not in accordance with morals. (Serbia, 10)

Similarly, an Egyptian journalist's religious bias on the June 30th revolution influenced their reporting: "I am Christian. (…) It was clear that I supported June thirty. This was reflected in my work" (Egypt, 12). A South African journalist expressed shock and concern about their editorial colleague's xenophobic bias and how their prejudice might be impacting the framing of xenophobic violence. The journalist's observations were a recollection of their past experience at another media outlet, and explicitly requested their identity was protected: "(…) my news editor who was black came to my desk and he went 'Typical fucking Zimbabweans, we let them into South Africa and then this is what they do.' And I was like 'This is a news editor! How is he framing these stories?'" (South Africa, 22).

More broadly, a journalist conveyed concern about media narratives in South Africa being constructed by journalists with racial and class bias entrenched in the inherent privilege, reinforced by the legacy of the Apartheid regime, and stressed media needed introspection: "(…) I think media houses really need to look inside themselves (…) it's affecting how we construct narratives around our country" (South Africa, 6). In contrast to explicit bias, many journalists apply the 'journalist first, then human' principle and found ways to balance their personal convictions against their commitment to objectivity: "You have to balance between what you are convinced of and what you do" (Egypt, 6); "Every writer has his own biases. But there are some objective professional standards" (Egypt, 4). Reporting the election of Mohamed Morsi, a journalist recalls: "Behind me were thousands celebrating his victory and I hadn't wanted him to win. However, I had to be objective, so I appeared so despite my inner unhappiness" (Egypt, 22). Similar tension was expressed by another journalist: "I suppose because we are all human we will be guided by our morals and ethics. But I will not allow my morals or ethics to get in the way of a proper story" (South Africa, 1).

Objectivity posed particular challenges in Kenya, where ***journalists grappled with questions around their obligation to report election violence objectively while***

holding responsibility to maintain peace. Specifically, journalists questioned whether the inclusion of objective 'facts' was conducive or even advisable, especially in their coverage of ethnically motivated conflicts or legitimacy of electoral processes, where the pursuit of objectivity necessitates the inclusion of information that could be interpreted by the public as inciting violence:

> (…) you want to inform people of what is really going on, at the same time you don't want to. The flipside is incitement or provocation, so how do you become objective without necessarily inciting? How do you question the process without causing alarm and despondency? (Kenya, 25)

Similarly, a South African journalist expressed dilemma over covering xenophobic attacks as a public interest issue while considering the risk that the same media coverage might inspire copycat acts of crime: "(…) if you don't cover them, then you are denying the public the right to information in a democracy. But if you cover it, then you are running a risk of fuelling this thing" (South Africa, 10). Another journalist explains the dilemma of reporting on xenophobic violence while at the same time avoiding giving perpetrators of xenophobic violence or "terrorists" media coverage: "My view is that terrorists, all that they want is publicity, which is like oxygen to them that keeps them alive" (South Africa, 10)**.**

Truthfulness was the second most significant ethical value discussed by journalists across all four countries, most commonly referenced by South African journalists: "(…) for me writing any story whether it's in conflict or whatever, it's to stay as near to the truth as possible" (South Africa, 2); "I strive to always tell the story truthfully" (South Africa, 20); "(…) the main principle is to get the best story. And the best story generally is the story that is closest to the truth" (South Africa, 7); "For me, basically, it was the question of truth. I think that's one of the values – to cover the event as truthfully as possible" (South Africa, 10); "Am I writing the truth or not (...)" (South Africa, 1). Deeper philosophical definitions of 'truth' notwithstanding, journalists interpreted the 'truth' to mean exposing the core of an issue: "to get to the truth of the matter even if the truth is murky or fuzzy" (South Africa, 25); or going beyond the event of the conflict and understanding the true issues motivating protestors: "(…) my truth was the reality of those people who were protesting. Not the knock-on effects of the protest or anything like that" (South Africa, 15).

Reporting the truth protected journalists from those who may be angered by it: "(…) because with the truth even if someone is bitter with you, deep down their conscience tells them you said the truth" (Kenya, 3). In Serbia, one journalist continues to be guided by principles established in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, one of which is to report truthfully and completely: "(…) there was the Law on Public Information which contained a very important sentence at the very beginning: 'the duty of public media, public communications, is to inform truly, timely and completely'. More than that? What more than that? Truly, timely and completely. That is completely the same that is true for us in the weekly" (Serbia, 22); while another journalist cognizant of his human fallibility maintains "one rule when making a newspaper – do not ever lie knowingly – and I really have never lied knowingly. Have I ever lied unconsciously? I have. Have I ever made a mistake? I have. It happens" (Serbia, 10).

Linking back to an earlier challenge deliberated by Kenyan journalists on balancing their obligation to report objectively or maintain peace, here a journalist expresses the same dilemma on practicing peace journalism over reporting the truth: "I think when you go to peace journalism then you are violating certain principles that make a journalist. Journalists should tell the truth. If the sky is blue it's blue, there is nothing we can do about it, it's blue not red" (Kenya, 24). The journalist recalls having to censor information on voting inconsistencies for fear of stirring up conflict: "If the truth was told and probably the opposition would not have accepted the results and people would have taken to the streets (…) but is your work as journalist to say that we do not want people to fight? But if the truth is the truth why not just say it?" (Kenya, 24). "Honesty" and exclusion of "sectarian terms" were essential principles to avoiding sectarian violence and holding officials accountable in Egypt (Egypt, 19).

To a lesser extent, journalists also referred to upholding ethical principles of "***fairness, independence (…) credibility, integrity, accuracy***" (South Africa, 23); integrity by avoiding "blood and gore" of sensational reporting: "(…) you need to ask yourself whether or not you are going to report on things in such a way that you are able to look at yourself in the mirror" (South Africa, 15); Quality, although not precisely defined, was of importance to a Serbian journalists who also pointed out its limitations in light of media's commercial imperatives:

> One of the elements is to do your job the best you can from the aspect of the journalist. We had a story of better quality than others. That was important to me. Second, to respect the principles of the profession, ethical laws, and third, to be successful in the market. The third one is sometimes opposite to the first, but personally, all of that is important to me, quality, ethics and market success. It is all a bit too ambitious. (Serbia, 14)

Lastly, accuracy was noted: "important thing is to take case in conveying the opinions of the people as they said it exactly and that you don't tarnish that opinion" (Egypt, 1); and, independence: "to hold government and everyone else to account" (South Africa, 23).

The ***existence and adherence by journalists to code of ethics or code of conduct*** was seldom discussed. In Kenya journalists confirmed that "each media house has its own code of ethics" and that the "Kenya Media Council at the moment is working on a joint code of ethics for journalists" (Kenya, 11). In some cases, ethics can be used by governments as an opportunity to impose restrictive practices, that is, to legitimate the intimidation of journalists who are threatened with negative consequences of pursuing 'unethical' practices, which can include the distribution of information against the national interest. A South African journalist relies on a code of ethics implemented by their own newspaper: "I think it's a good thing. I think that all careers should have ethical code of conduct. I think it's a good thing that one has a guideline, like a map" (South Africa, 1). In Egypt, one journalist said the "profession was harmed" with respect to adherence to ethical principles and codes of conduct (Egypt, 6), while another explained that their newspaper's ethical codes are built on "personal criteria that became criteria for the newspaper" and these are likely to change with the next change in leadership of the newspaper (Egypt, 5).

4.3.2. Ethical dilemmas and challenges during reporting

Although some of the challenges and dilemmas discussed below appear elsewhere in the report under other subject areas, these emerged in journalists' answers to questions on ethical dilemmas and challenges, perhaps demonstrating their pervasive effect on different aspects of journalism. Journalists' answers reveal that their interpretation of 'dilemma' was often understood to mean 'challenge' and was

therefore framed that way. These included: media ownership and censorship; intimidation; bribery and corruption; trust in sources; manufacturing of news; maintaining peace through exclusion of extremist voices and omission of identity markers in relation to conflict and crime; sourcing and publication of images of blood and death; balancing of emotions and detachment; limiting publicity of terrorism and risk copy cats of xenophobic violence; breaking news of death to the family; reporting the bigger issue behind criminal behaviour; protecting victims' identities; civic education versus right to vote along tribal lines; balancing of exclusivity and accuracy; pressure to access ethnically diverse sources; denial of xenophobic violence; challenging stereotypes; violating law or ethics for a story.

Media Ownership, Advertising and Censorship: Challenges posed by media ownership, mentioned at several points throughout the report, permeated discussions on ethical orientations and related dilemmas. The relationship between media ownership, advertising and censorship has been particularly significant in Kenya: "Unfortunately that is the nature of ownership in this country; owners are in bed or in cahoots with different political power bases. As a commercial entity you need to be able to work with the establishment – that is the reality of it" (Kenya, 25). The government and political groups are often among the biggest advertisers, alongside marketing companies and institutions, using this financial leverage to influence media houses and journalists' reporting by threatening to withdraw advertising if met with negative reporting. The sentiment was evident among several journalists: "There are some stories you can't run" (Kenya, 1); "Even if you do a story that is critical of the government it doesn't see the light of the day" (Kenya, 4); "They call the newsroom and say they will pull off the adverts, and that is a danger to journalism" (Kenya, 17); "So you have to balance between public interests and commercial interests, and the latter appear to be the biggest stumbling block in terms of vetting what I should do" (Kenya, 3).

Within this environment journalist and editors are often faced with the dilemma of whether to pursue a story which they know is of public interest but critical of an influential source and therefore risk being fined or losing advertising, or ignore the story and negate their professional obligation. A Kenyan journalist explains the dilemma of sticking to their principles and pursuing what might be a critical story

against their responsibility of sustaining the media business and employment of journalists: “It is not unique but the survival of this entity that employs very many people and therefore supports so many families, is dependent on a decision you are making. Sometimes you ask yourself ‘Is my principle worth it?’ and that is not a situation that one needs to find themselves in” (Kenya, 25).

Kenya’s media ownership conditions affected the coverage of the ICC trial of President Uhuru Kenyatta. One Kenyan journalist explains that the coverage of the ICC turned from a judicial process into a political one, because of the “fact that most media houses in Kenya are politically owned” (Kenya, 24) allowing politicians to influence newsrooms that were reporting the trial: “I believe it was a strategy of the current president and the deputy president to put across the siege mentality which worked very well for them” (Kenya, 24). The outcome of the described interference was censorship from “both in-house and from outside” (Kenya, 5) and a vetoing of publications critical of Kenyatta: “So as much as you wanted to write something which you know is true and this is against Uhuru you couldn’t be published” (Kenya, 5). Journalists also faced editorial pressure to censor their language, avoiding the use of the term ‘charges’ for instance. The political lens on ICC trial coverage meant journalists took on the role of jurors: “It speaks volumes for a section of us who openly ignore journalistic ethics. For me it was unethical to go too much allowing the political angle to override the judicial angle. We don’t know whether the accused were innocent or guilty, it is not our role” (Kenya, 24).

Intimidation: To a considerable degree, the intimidation of journalists is linked to media ownership structures and degree of political interference. Both Kenyan and Egyptian journalists shared experiences of intimidation: “We have to balance between our economic commercial interests and what we publish. But then there were also threats, outright threats to journalists” (Kenya, 1); “At times the lives of journalists are in danger, your family is threatened” (Kenya, 11). If journalists encounter the same person several times within a short span of time, they presume they are being followed. In an effort to minimize the risk of inciting violence during the 2013 elections journalists were more easily intimidated into disregarding stories that would have exposed electoral corruption. A journalist recalls going to a tallying centre and feeling intimidated by a paramilitary General Service Unit officer:

> By seeing things and keeping quiet, we committed a professional crime. So we were not supposed to go that way. We accepted to be intimidated. (…) They surrounded the whole place, some out and others inside. So you are wondering whether you'll make a statement that will provoke. You aren't sure so you just make the announcement and you freeze, you wait for things to cool down before you say two other things. So that's intimidation. Why should a GSU officer stand behind you when you are doing your work (…)?" (Kenya, 19+20)

Another journalist describes the ethical sacrifices and level of threat and intimidation they face in their efforts to cover electoral corruption in exchange for preserving the safety of their families and themselves, saying: "So at times you let your ethics be rubbished by the lies that you publish. (…) There is no story that is bigger than your life. These people are criminals; they are thugs and may kill or injure you" (Kenya, 5). One Egyptian journalist describes having to withhold information of a sensitive nature (allegations of Muslim girls being kidnapped by monasteries), which could lead to incitement of violence against a source or threats of violence against the journalist and their family: "They will not publish this information here. I do not think any newspaper can publish something like that. (…) a person can pay the price, they can kill him" (Egypt, 12).

Bribery/Corruption: Across the four countries under study, bribery appears to be the most pressing issue in Kenya, and journalists from Serbia and South Africa saying they have never paid a source or accepted a bribe, even when they have been offered money in exchange for favourable reporting (Serbia, 22; South Africa, 1). Operating within an environment that censors and intimidates means that journalists are exposed to the risk of heavy fines or unemployment: "If I earn so little money and someone brings me money, school fees for my children, I'll run a story. So, all these issues come into play when it comes to conflict reporting" (Kenya, 19+20). Some journalists are demoralised and accept the status quo and become vulnerable to bribery, while others are said to actively manipulate the circumstances and engage in extortion: "There are some rotten journalists also extort money from various leaders in the name of, if they don't do that, damaging stories will be done against them (...)" (Kenya, 2). Journalists made a distinction between those working for smaller or rural media outlets where salaries were lower and corruption was said to be greater and more likely to go undetected: "they are forced to rely on handouts from politicians and

business people" (Kenya, 2); "these areas are very vast, so if you are given a lift by the governor or by an officer you can't be critical" (Kenya, 8), compared to journalists working for bigger media where allegations or evidence of bribery were said to be investigated. At the same time journalists stressed that bribery isn't automatically an outcome of working in a corrupt system or earning a poor salary, but rather a reflection of an individual's character: "Some people might be poorly paid but the way they are brought up doesn't entertain corruption. They just want to do the right thing. (…) There are journalists who aren't well remunerated but they continue to do their work impartially" (Kenya, 19+20).

Manufacturing of news: An ethical dilemma exclusive to South Africa journalists dealt with the 'manufacturing of news' or becoming active participants of news, whether the media's mere presence at community protests invites reactions from those partaking: "people want to be photographed because they want the world to see what they're going through" (South Africa, 8); "(…) people are not doing anything, they are not toyi-toying,[11] they are not doing anything. But as soon as they see a cameraman holding a camera, they start toyi-toying, they start burning things and all that" (South Africa, 10); "(…) the moment you bring a camera, the moment you know, there's this feeling that people need to play for the camera" (South Africa, 15). Journalists said the ethical challenge goes both ways – people start performing once they see the media, and likewise the media might ask people to perform in order to get engaging footage: "(…) and then the people stop and stand around, but for that minute or so they did their bit so the TV cameras can have nice footage. Manufacturing the news in some ways, I suppose it is" (South Africa, 8).

Journalists also have to ensure they aren't dealing with a "rent a crowd" – people hired to participate in a protest with a promise of receiving food: "That's happened to me a few times where it's about a political issue and politicians will bus in people with the promise of lunch or something else" (South Africa, 13). During xenophobic violence the presence of the media can invite diverse reactions. On the one hand, people see the media as an intrusion and a culprit: "ah, look at these guys, making money off of us and they're exactly like these bloody foreigners, attack them" (South Africa, 15).

[11] Toyi-toying is an Apartheid era resistance dance.

Maintaining peace – Whom to give a voice to – Inclusion/Exclusion of extreme views: As an extension of the self-identified journalistic role of 'agent for peace', here journalists highlighted ethical dilemmas around maintaining peace while adhering to ethical principles. For journalists across all four countries decisions and dilemmas on the inclusion or exclusion of extreme voices in their reporting were discussed in relation to ethical principles of objectivity and balance. Exercising objectivity/balance was relative to the extremism of the viewpoint of their source; those who the journalists deemed as radical and disruptive to peace and harmony deserved to be criticized. Journalists also understood their 'ethical role' to be "a filter" of information: "It is not the journalist's role to write about everything he sees" (Serbia, 12), and: "No, it is clear that those who are against the Pride, you describe and extract the most negative things. Very gladly from such people I make silly creatures in the newspaper. They are silly anyway, they are creatures, but they are dangerous" (Serbia, 2).

Journalists said they were not obliged to exercise balance or objectivity by including oppositional voice and stances, if those voices were expressing extremist views, and will go as far as marginalizing and deriding them:

> To what extent you will broadcast the statements of type 'it is scientifically proven that homosexuals are sick, there are treatments which can cure that'. Such things you are not broadcasting because as a journalist your duty is to be educated and to know that this is something that is a complete nonsense. (Serbia, 1)

An Egyptian journalist on their coverage of sectarian conflicts:

> I have to consider the moderate viewpoints and expose these radical viewpoints. It is not sufficient to overlook them but I also have to expose and scandalize their practices, mark them as retarded and evil, whether Muslims or Copts. I don't want to wrong society. (Egypt, 19)

A South African journalist on their coverage of 2008 xenophobic violence:

> I felt at that point you needed to pick holes in what they were saying. You needed to try and find the Achilles heel to their logic because it was bent logic and it didn't take a lot for me, I didn't have to put my ethics on the line by

> taking a side. I had to just do what my job required of me; present their side as illogical as it might have seemed, as misguided as it was. (South Africa, 19)

On the coverage of 2008 parliamentary election campaign conflicts in Serbia, another journalist echoed the above view that responsibility lies with journalists and editors to judge the tenor of the views being expressed and whether these are inciting violence: "I am speaking about serious extremism which should not have space or otherwise it should be accompanied by an adequate text to make people clear that it is wrong. You cannot shoot someone who calls for violence" (Serbia, 23).

Maintaining peace: Identifying ethnicity, nationality, race, religion in conflicts: In the lead up to the 2013 elections journalists engaged in debates over whether to report on *inter-ethnic/tribal violence* during elections and how to go about it: "Should you report the incidents of violence, should you cover those events? Because, you don't want to be seen as creating panic among the public, yet you also have a responsibility to inform" (Kenya, 9); "(…) how do you inform without getting people worked up" (Kenya, 25). According to a Kenyan journalist, the media devoted great effort to raising consciousness among Kenyans on the importance of holding peaceful elections: "even the politicians felt under pressure and couldn't tell people to go the streets because the media would condemn them" (Kenya, 4).

When they reported on violence journalists avoided mentioning names of communities (i.e. Luo or Kalenjin or Kikuyu), instead reporting only that "people have been killed" (Kenya, 21) and describing the conflict itself: "You might mention the conflict, the reason for the conflict, but really, you don't name the communities that are fighting" (Kenya, 25). Journalists packaged stories in such a way that omitted inflammatory information: "Sometimes you would come across a story and say that this should not even go on air, but you find a way to package it in a way that even if they read it, they won't go and attack their brothers next door" (Kenya, 10). At one newspaper, subjective stories that were deemed inciting were moderated by gatekeeping mechanisms: "A lot of stories were dismissed because they were too ethnic, they were too emotive, they were out of anger, stories written out of solidarity with your own, so those editors try to moderate" (Kenya, 8). A Kenyan journalist explains the importance of choosing their nationality over their ethnicity when reporting on information which could incite violence: "Of course you belong to a

certain community and nation. But where I find the principle of 'being Kenyan first' vital is where you ensure your country doesn't descend into anarchy by airing inciting information" (Kenya, 18).

South African journalists criticized the media's tendency to state the nationalities of those involved in crimes, contributing to *racism and xenophobia*: "There's very little critical engagement with 'is it okay to out someone's nationality in a headline when there is already xenophobia'" (South Africa, 22).

Anti-Somali and anti-Muslim sentiment and the marginalisation of this community and religious group in Kenya continues to be reinforced by the media "not reporting, not asking questions, by taking the official narrative, a narrative that victimizes or generalizes, politicizes punishment over communities and pushes that ahead as the narrative" (Kenya, 16). The media continues to associate the terms "terrorist" and "Islamist" with Al-Shabab and the Somali nationality interchangeably, "without contextualising the story" (Kenya, 23). In response, a newspaper implemented an *editorial policy* two years ago that says nationalities should not be mentioned in coverage of conflicts: "(…) of what value is it to say a suspect of Somali origin? Could it be that you are inciting people against the Somalis?" (Kenya, 26). An Egyptian journalist said they won't publish anything they felt was "against Egypt, or society, or a certain group" (Egypt, 5), while another wouldn't use the term "Muslim Brotherhood militias" in their reporting unless such claims had been investigated and confirmed (Egypt, 19).

In Kenya, different standards are applied for larger communities versus the smaller North Rift communities: "(…) because if it is the Luo fighting with Kalenjins we try to hide the identities or naming of the communities involved. But when it comes to the North Rift communities, the Pokot and the Turkana we just say the Turkana raided these Pokot villages" (Kenya, 1); journalists speculated that the reason for this discrepancy is that containing violence between larger communities would be much harder than violence among smaller communities. There was also a difference noted between local and international media's approach to the coverage of elections and the naming of communities: "The international media goes to that extent of mentioning communities, unlike us who just refer to them as ethnic communities"

(Kenya, 3). More broadly, journalists referred to ethical decisions on use of language when reporting on conflicts such as xenophobia and sectarian tensions in Egypt. With South Africa's violent and racially divisive history, the media "always have to be cautious whether or not the words do not in the end perpetuate hatred or hate speech and divide the society" (South Africa, 4) as when the tabloid newspaper 'Daily Sun' in their coverage of xenophobic violence referred to undocumented nationals as 'aliens': "they reported it raw!" (South Africa, 4). During Milosevic's extradition to The Hague Tribunal, an editor of a high circulation paper in Serbia faced the dilemma of deciding what to put on the front cover while ensuring that it won't be seen as "some idiotic provocation" (Serbia, 9).

In Egypt and Kenya, journalists considered *national security* over professional obligation to report new information: "(…) if there is something that effects national security matter, you will not allow it, even if it is professionally correct. Because here the principle is assuring the benefits of the collective is not harmed" (Egypt, 5). A Kenyan journalist adds: "(…) we want to give the correct, full information but at times in a few occasions we are sensitive to national security and no one tells us not to do anything" (Kenya, 22).

Images of blood and death: Journalists in Kenya and South Africa brought up ethical dilemmas in relation to the publication of photographs that feature death and blood, as well as restrictions in taking photographs at scenes of conflict or crime. In Kenya specifically dilemmas and self-criticism emerged in relation to photos published featuring victims: "During the Westgate, there was a woman writhing in pain and the Daily Nation splashed that picture on page one. The editor was sacked. It was unforgivable. (Kenya, Interview 3).[12] Another journalist explains: "The challenge with Westgate is that we didn't know it was happening. On the first day we gave a general headline, 'Massacre at the Mall', and our choice of photograph was unfortunate because we used that of an injured, screaming woman, thinking it would have a good impact but in hindsight it was bad" (Kenya, Interview 22).

[12] The *Sunday Nation*'s front page on 9/22/2013 depicted a close-up photo of a woman in pain with a blood covered face. The cover led to the suspension of the editorial director, following numerous complaints and backlash among the Kenyan public.

According to the journalists' accounts, the decision to publish the Westgate attack photograph – distributed by a wire service – was reached in a meeting among the editorial director and senior journalists, and was driven by tight deadlines and the director's impressions of the magnitude of the attack. The backlash included people ripping off the front pages and online threats of boycott: "(…) if there are children watching these kinds of stuff being shown live on TV, it's your responsibility to protect them. And even other people can't stand that" (Kenya, Interview 13). While criticism by the public forced journalists to reflect, they were sceptical of the government's criticism, saying: "it's in the interest of the government to clamp down on anything that they think may paint them badly" (Kenya, Interview 17). Another dilemma journalists face is if they publish a gruesome photo, they may face criticism as in the Westgate case, however, "if we don't publish, we'll be told 'you cowards why didn't you publish that photo, you should have shown what the government did to that man who was tortured'" (Kenya, Interview 14).

Several journalists mentioned the existence of *internal policies or guidelines* on publication of photos which show blood and dead bodies, although adherence is inconsistent and sometimes difficult to implement.

Both in Kenya and South Africa, journalists identified challenges of being denied permission by police to take photographs at scenes of conflict, to conceal deaths of protestors or extra-judicial killings (South Africa, Interview 16; Kenya, Interview 11). In South Africa journalists overstep the restriction and take photos in pursuit of exclusive footage, while in Kenya journalist face further risks as journalists are obliged to seek permission from police before accessing crimes scenes or publishing any photos.

Balancing emotions and detachment: Challenges similar to those identified in relation to objectivity (balancing personal values and beliefs against professional and ethical ones), emerged more explicitly here as dilemmas around the burden of balancing emotions against the professional obligation to remain detached. An Egyptian journalist recalls their coverage of the Maspero violence during which numerous churches were burned and people killed: "A lot of people, whom I knew, got killed. I was very affected. The day passes and I end up sitting with the killer. You

sit with them but as a journalist, who has journalistic experience, you have to discipline yourself because I am not here to attack, I went as a journalist. I was sent as a journalist" (Egypt, 10).

Two South African journalists questioned their responsibility to interfere and stop acts of xenophobic violence against their journalistic responsibility to remain detached observers:

> (…) that's where you have the battle with yourself. Do you help? You know stop what's happening or do you just stand behind the police barricades and just watch how all this unfolds and report on it? And I had serious conflict with myself back then. I still have it when I go into conflict situations and often go home at night and cry because I didn't do anything to help you know. (South Africa, 20)
>
> Look, it's difficult because I mean you see this lady sitting there with a two-year-old child, she's got nowhere to go or she's come from a foreign country, she's homeless (…) And they are beating her up and they throwing all her stuff out on the floor. What do you do? Is it to your keeping? (South Africa, 24)

Another South African journalist spoke of the challenge of isolating emotions from their coverage of community protests, especially when members of the community affected by the conflict offer the journalist refuge from violence and as a result of such personal interaction become friends: "So you got to maintain the journalistic distance to the extent that, well, if you become emotional then the impact gets lost on the story. So I think that's been one of the issues that I've grappled with" (South Africa, 6). However, another journalist criticised distance as an "antiquated view of how we approach journalism" (South Africa, 18). This journalist explains encouraging photographers to put their cameras away and participate in the burial of a victim of xenophobia: "Because I realised then that as much as we try to be detached from these kinds of things, some of it must seep into you" (South Africa, 18).

A number of additional dilemmas were raised, including (in brief): (1) whether it is the journalist's role to break news of death to a family while working on a story (Kenya, 13); (2) balancing a journalist's commitment to reporting the bigger issue behind criminal behaviour, such as a community protest, while at the same time witnessing criminal activity they disapprove of (South Africa, 7); (3) emphasising the human element in a conflict story while ensuring they protect victims' identities (especially

undocumented nationals at risk of xenophobic violence) (South Africa, 22); (4) reporting on election campaigns by encouraging the public not to vote along tribal lines, while negotiating the fact that the public has a constitutional right and freedom of political choice (Kenya, 3); (5) balancing economic success of exclusivity and ethical obligation to accuracy (Serbia, 14); (6) frustration with needless pressure to access ethnically diverse sources (lawyers) to alleviate likelihood of perceived bias, although nature of story (technicality of judicial processes in ICC trials) doesn't require ethnic diversity (Kenya, 24); (7) reporting on what journalists believed to be xenophobic violence, amidst denial from political actors (South Africa, 17); (8) relying on sources that are vocal and informative but also perpetuate stereotypes, while stressing importance of media to unpack and challenge stereotypes that contribute to existing societal tensions and conflicts (South Africa, 21; 11); and lastly, (9) dilemma over violating the law or ethical principles depending on the intended outcome of the story a journalist is reporting (South Africa, 1).

Several journalists said they faced ***no ethical dilemmas,*** or at least any challenges they faced were not perceived by them as dilemmas, and this was primarily noted among journalists in Serbia. One journalist in Serbia claimed outright that they never faced any dilemmas (Serbia, 18), while another journalist said they were "too old to have value-related dilemmas" and explained having faced "tactical" considerations in terms of whether political or police reactions to issues were reasonable or could have been better (Serbia, 22). On their coverage of Milosevic and The Hague Tribunal one journalist explains facing "no dilemmas" except for being guided by the principle of respecting "a person and a person's dignity" meaning they did not want to "belittle [or] humiliate" him or make him out to be "a monster" (Serbia, 24). Another journalist explains having their dilemmas eliminated by reporting the truth: "In general I did not have any dilemma. I knew how it all started. I was a witness of the war, witness of dumbing down, witness of unprecedented propaganda and lies. Therefore I did not have any dilemma, and I thought, 'it's good to have the truth come to light'" (Serbia, 25).

5. Conclusion and Outlook

Overall, our analysis indicates that to varying degrees the four constituents of journalism culture, i.e. journalistic work practices, role perceptions, ethical orientations and working conditions could have both a *productive* and *counterproductive* impact on journalistic performance when covering democratisation conflicts. Consequently, the nature of a productive impact would inform journalism's role in democratisation processes as more likely *constructive*, while a counterproductive impact would render journalism's role more *destructive*. Hence, while the terms productive vs. counterproductive specify the possible implications of constituents within the professional field of journalism, the terms constructive vs. destructive describe the potential impact of journalism within the process of democratisation.

From our study we may conclude that journalists are a professional community and they do share some knowledge and believes. What most journalists in our sample had in common was a high awareness and knowledge of the overall role of journalism in society, and as counterpart in the political setting, also specifically in relation to democracy and democratization processes. What made the difference, were country- and conflict-specific contexts.

On the one hand, a potentially ***productive impact*** can be observed within *role perceptions* (and *ethical orientations)* of journalists and their approach to covering conflicts. Despite all mentioned limitations, journalists maintain commitment towards strong ethical ideals and values, for example, balanced and truthful reporting, and feel their professional work includes a wide range of roles. It includes not only informing accurately and fairly about democratisation conflicts but also overseeing and questioning political authorities (watchdog role), investigating and explaining the contexts of conflicts (investigator and teacher), capturing voices of the voiceless and fighting for people's rights (agent for social change), moderating between conflict parties and seeking to get people to debate, challenging sources that are perceived to incite violence, and finally seeking to keep the country together, and to transmit messages of tolerance and peace (agents for peace). In extension of their role as 'agents of peace', journalists consider it their ethical obligation to limit the likelihood of

inciting violence by questioning extreme voices and omitting the naming of ethnic or religious groups involved in conflicts, albeit, by negotiating their commitment to objective/balanced reporting. Thus, in certain cases they decide in favour of an ethics of responsibility, instead of an ethics of conviction. Journalistic *work practices* should enhance conflict-sensitive reporting, as far as balancing different sides of a story, challenging 'inciting' voices, and the responsible choice of words are understood to be the overall goals when presenting and framing a conflict story.

On the other hand, analysis showed also a potentially ***counterproductive impact*** of work practices, role perceptions and ethical orientations. At the level of *work practices*, the described universal logic of 'sensationalising' and (over)simplifying news and focussing on violence and crime when selecting and framing a story seem to considerably reduce chances for conflict-sensitive reporting. With regards to *role perceptions*, an active understanding of one's own role as a journalist can be counteracting democratisation, if the journalists' individual beliefs as well as their perception of a certain conflict are marked by non-democratic values, intolerance and even hatred. Moreover, the fact that some journalists first and foremost address the "like-minded" public who shares the same opinions and values can be seen as reducing chances of societal understanding. Similar observations were noted on the inquiry of *ethical ideals and values*, which at times were overridden by journalists' personal biases (national, racial, religious, moral etc.) resulting in imbalanced portrayals of conflicts. At the same time, pursuit of objectivity was at times deemed counterproductive and therefore destructive to democratisation, especially when reporting of conflicts necessitates inclusion of information which could incite violence. As counterproductive influences on ethical adherence, journalists mentioned, among others, media ownership and censorship, intimidation and corruption. Not least, although data analysis has not focused on this constituent of journalism so far, the journalists' reflections (on practices, roles and ethics) already demonstrate that a counterproductive impact emerges within the *structural conditions* of journalism outside and inside the media organisation – e.g. in the form of a repressive legal framework limiting media freedom, massive pressure and interference by political and other societal actors, for example in the way of political ownership or economic censorship, corruption and various forms of threats aiming both at individual journalists and entire media organisations. Journalists also describe limitations with

regard to the professionalization of the working environment which is perceived not to be providing sufficient training on conflict-sensitive reporting and safety measures for journalists reporting on conflicts as well as being characterised by financial insecurity, short-staffed newsrooms and juniorisation.

When it comes to ***comparative findings and cross-national variations and similarities***, our analysis strongly reflects specific *country contexts* to be a consistent factor that shapes journalistic work practices, role perceptions and ethical orientations. On the other hand, various cross-national *similarities* have been detected. Concerning work practices, journalists in all four countries referred to overall, "universal" journalistic routines and logics when describing procedures of selecting topics, investigating and framing stories – however intervening factors on the level of structural constraints within and outside the newsroom might lead to different outcomes of these similar practices. On role perceptions, most journalists refer to similar overall roles while on the other hand, the concrete understanding of these roles and how to implement them when reporting on conflicts might differ considerably. In terms of *ethical orientations*, journalists across all countries identify overarching guiding values of objectivity and truthfulness (among others) but how they interact with these and apply them to conflict reporting depends on the kinds of (country and conflict-specific) dilemmas they encounter.

Broadly speaking, various similarities could be detected between Serbia and South Africa which might potentially be linked to the level of democratisation in both countries. Some common features could also be found in South Africa and Kenya, which might stem from the fact that they belong to the same world region and face similar challenges during democratisation (e.g. with regard to ethnic tensions). Egypt, on the other hand, appears to be a case on its own with regard to many aspects, which is not surprising, given the specific situation in the country, where the struggle between religious and secular powers continues.

Journalistic work practices, role perceptions and ethical orientation seem to also vary ***depending on conflict type***. Here, the journalists' individual perception of the conflict as well as the stance of the media outlet seems to be crucial intervening factors during reporting. Moreover, role perceptions seem to differ dependent on

conflicts: While journalists highlight watchdog and investigative roles when reporting on ‘predominantly political’ conflicts (such as election campaigns and conflicts over distribution of power), the understanding of acting as agents for social change as well as agents for peace seems to dominate when reporting on conflicts over citizenship and minority rights. However, these are only first hints as further systematic analysis is needed here. Similarly work practices depend on conflicts: while in general journalists know and apply a wide range of practices and routines in any country, the type of conflict (especially in terms of its physical violence) may influence the selection of the topic, its ranking as breaking news, access to sources, the extent to which reporters expose themselves to dangerous situations, etc.

In order to draw further insights and analytical conclusions from our study, we will continue to conduct an in-depth analysis of all themes of inquiry, in-depth country and conflict-case specific analyses, comparative analysis of different themes as well as different types of democratization conflicts and a triangulation with findings of other studies within MeCoDEM.

The next steps of analysis will focus on the journalists’ perceptions of ***structural working conditions*** which interviewees elaborated on in much detail. Future analysis and publications will thus provide in-depth explanation of factors that shaped the detected work practices, role perceptions and ethical orientations at the level of structural working conditions outside and inside the newsroom, such as journalists’ relationship and interaction with external sources of power and working mechanisms within the media organisation.

Given that the current report provided an overview of core findings with regard to work practices, role perceptions and ethical orientations, further steps of analysis will investigate these themes of inquiry in more depth. In this regard, systematic in-depth analysis of ***specific country contexts*** **and** ***conflict-specific data*** will give further insights on specific characteristics of journalistic work practices, role perceptions, ethical orientations and working conditions during one specific conflict and in one specific country context.

Future in-depth ***comparative analyses*** will focus on specific themes as well as different types of democratization conflicts. In some cases, they might encompass all four countries, but two-country comparisons will be equally valuable.

The fact that this study is part of the overall MeCoDEM project will permit a ***triangulation of findings*****,** the further along the MeCoDEM project proceeds: Work Package 4 research findings on journalistic actors will therefore be explained and further deepened; systematically contextualized with results of the content analysis on media representations of democratisation conflicts (Work Package3) as well as the findings of work packages on communication of civil society actors and political activists (Work Package 5), government communication (Work Package 6), the contribution of ICTs to the dynamics of democratisation conflicts (Work Package 7), and Work Package 8 research on media assistance organisations. Hence, triangulation methods will allow to systematically assess the relative contribution of contextual factors to the variations among journalistic cultures under study.

Finally, the above mentioned steps of further analysis and interpretation will allow to conceptualize a ***model of 'conflict journalism'***, that is, journalism in democratisation conflicts, or more broadly, in transitional societies.

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Appendix

Detailed Sample description

In regards to ***covering one or several conflicts*** under study, 13 (54.2%) of 24 *Egyptian* journalists were employed within a newsroom during the Maspero demonstrations compared to 50% (12 out of 24) during 2012 elections, and 41.7% (10 journalists) during Post-June 30 Christian Muslim Violence. As for the *Kenyan* journalists, 20 out of 26 interviewees (76.9%) held a position within a newsroom during 2007 elections, while all interviewees were employed during 2013 elections, and a slightly lower 92.3% (24 interviewees) covered the Westgate attack. Among the *Serbian* journalists, 14 out of 24 interviewees (58.3%) worked as journalists during the arrest and extradition of Milosevic to the ICTY in comparison to 16 (66.7%) during the Parliamentary election 2008 and a lower 54.2% of interviewees (13 journalists) during the Pride Parade 2010. Among the *South African* interviewees, 21 out of 24 journalists (87.5%) operated within a newsroom during community protests compared to 79.2% (19 interviewees) during xenophobic violence, and a lower 62.5% (15 journalists) during the SONA conflict.[13] It is important to consider, however, that employment during a specific conflict does not necessarily mean the employed journalist covered that specific conflict.

The aim was to interview members of ***media outlets*** that have been content-analysed (WP3). In *Egypt*, the content analysis included Al Ahram, Al Masry Al Youm, and Al Shuruq newspapers. Of the interviewed journalists, 7 (29.2%) currently work at Al Ahram newspaper, while 3 (12.6%) work at Al Masry Al Youm and 5 (20.8%) work at Al Shuruq. Moreover, the interviews included journalists from additional media outlets, which include but are not limited to Misriyun, CBC, ONTV, Al Hayat TV, CBC and MBC Misr.[14] In *Kenya*, the Nation, the Standard and the Star were content-analysed. Nowadays, 11 (42.3%) of the interviewees work for Nation media, compared to 6 (23.1%) who work at the Standard and 1 journalist who works at the Star (3.8%). In addition, other journalists work/have worked for Citizen TV, KBC, KTN, the Monitor or the People Daily. In *Serbia*, the outlets that were content-

[13] In both Serbia and South Africa, one interviewee did not fill a questionnaire.
[14] One journalist did not indicate their current media outlet.

analysed were Politika, Vecernje Novosti, RTS, and B92 for all conflicts, and Blic, Pravda, Danas, Press, Pink and Prva for the 2010 Pride Parade Conflict. The interviewed journalists come from several media outlets, among which 3 work for Politika, 2 for Vecernje Novosti, 2 for RTS, 3 for B92, and 1 for Prva. As for Blic, 1 interviewee currently works for it, while 2 interviewees were employed at Blic in 2010. One interviewee worked for Press during Parliamentary election 2008 and the Pride Parade. Amongst the other media outlets that the interviewed journalists are/have been employed with are Vreme, Informer, TV Studio B, Mreza Production Group, VIN Production, Novi Magazin, Radio Television of Vojvodina (RTV) and Glas Javnosti. The *South African* outlets involved in the content analysis were Business Day, Daily Sun, Mail and Guardian, and New Age. Currently, 1 interviewee works for Business Day, while 2 interviewees previously worked for the Mail and Guardian during Conflict Case 1. Also, 1 interviewee worked for the Daily Sun during xenophobic violence and the SONA conflict, and 2 interviewees worked for New Age during xenophobic violence. Additionally, journalists from other media outlets were involved, most significantly: Die Burger, Cape Argus, eNCA, Primedia Broadcasting, Cape Times, EWN and Radio Islam.[15]

Moreover, another aim was to ***achieve a balance between junior and senior level journalists*** who vary in their ***ages, years of journalism experience, level of education*** *and* ***training.*** In *Egypt*, senior journalists dominate: 9 out of 24 interviewees (37.5%) are aged 50-59, 4 (16,7%) are aged 40-49, 1 is aged 60-70, whereas 5 (20.8%) are aged 20-29 and another 5 (20.8%) are aged 30-39. Only 1 interviewee has 1-10 years of journalism experience, 5 have 11-20 years of experience, and half of interviewees who indicated their experience have 21 years or more. Regarding their education and training, 18 (81%) of 22 respondents in this category hold a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent, while 3 interviewees (13.6%) hold Media Diplomas and 1 interviewee holds a Master's Degree. As for their training levels, 6 journalists (28.6% of the 21 interviewees who answered this question) have received no training, while 9 (42.9%) have specialized in journalism during their studies, in comparison to 5 (23.8%) who received in-house training at media outlets such as Al Ahram, AUC GAPP, Deutsche Welle, Areej and Reuters.

[15] It should also be noted that the numbers regarding the outlets where journalists are employed might have also varied throughout the different conflicts.

In *Kenya*, 18 (69.2%) of the 26 interviewees are aged 30-39, while 3 journalists (11.5%) are aged 40-49 and 4 are aged 50-59 (15.4%). Only 1 interviewee is in the 20-29 age group (3,8%). This reflects on their journalism experience, where 12 (46.2%) of the interviewed journalists have 6-10 years of experience, while 11.5% (3 journalists) have 1-5 years, 5 (19.2%) have 11-15 years and another 5 (19.2%) have 21 years or more. In comparison to Egypt, where none of the interviewees hold a high school degree, 3 (12.5%) of the Kenyan interviewees do, while 13 (54.2%) hold a Bachelor's Degree and 6 (25%) hold a Master's or equivalent, 1 journalist has earned a doctorate and 2 did not provide information on their education. Furthermore, all of the interviewees have received some form of journalistic training, whether journalism specialization during their studies (19 out of 25 respondents, 76%), in-house training (4 interviewees, 16%), or both.

In *Serbia*, the interviewed journalists also vary in their ages, where 5 (21.7%) out of 22 interviewees who indicated their age are aged 30-39, 11 (47.8%) are aged 40-49, 3 (13%) are aged 50 to 59, and 4 (17.3%) are 60 or above. While 11 of the 24 interviewees who indicated how long they have been working in journalism have 21-30 years of experience, and 6 (25%) have over 30, 4 (16.7%) have 16-20, and 2 interviewees have 11-15. Only 1 interviewee has 6-10 years of experience and there were no interviewees with 1-5 years of journalism experience. Similar to the Kenyan sample, some journalists had completed high school (5 interviewees of the 24 respondents in this category, 20.8%), while the majority (16 interviewees, 66.7%) holds a Bachelor's degree and 1 journalist holds a Master's degree. In Serbia, nearly half the interviewees (11 out of 24 respondents in this category, 45.8%) have received no journalistic training at all, while 7 (29.2%) have specialized in journalism studies and 5 (20.8%) have received in-house training at media outlets.

As for the *South African* interviewees, 50% out of 22 interviewees who indicated their age are aged 30-39, while 8 (36.4%) are aged 40-49, 1 interviewee is aged 20-29 and only 2 are aged 50 or above. Balance has been achieved in terms of their journalistic experience, where 5 (20.8% of 25 respondents in this category) have max. 10 years of experience, 8 (33.3%) have worked in journalism for 11-15 years, 6 (25%) for 16-20 years, 2 (8.3%) for 21-25 years, and 3 (12.5%) for 26-30 years.

Similar to their Egyptian counterparts, none of the interviewed journalists hold a high school degree, where the majority holds a Bachelor's degree (15 out of 24 respondents in this this category, 62.5%), and 8 (33.3%) hold a Master's degree or equivalent. More than half of the 21 interviewees who indicated their training, have specialized in journalism or other communication fields during their studies (14 interviewees, 66.7%), while 5 (23.8%) have received no journalistic training, and 2 interviewees (9.5%) received in-house training at media outlets.

There was some balance achieved regarding the ***gender*** of interviewees amongst both the Serbian and South African journalists, where 11 (44%) of the *Serbian* interviewees were female and 14 (56%) were male, and 10 (43.5%) of the *South African* interviewees were female while 13 (56.5%) were male. However, this balance was not completely attained amongst the *Kenyan* interviewees, where 20 (76.9%) were male and 6 (23.1%) were female, much less amongst the *Egyptian* ones, where only 2 interviewees (8.3%) were female and the rest (22 interviewees, 91.7%) were male. This imbalance, however, is primarily a reflection of the general gender distribution across newsrooms and more broadly the demographics of the journalistic field in the two countries.

Moreover, the interviewees also varied in ***the types of media outlets*** they have worked for. Nowadays, the majority of the *Egyptian* interviewees work for print outlets (15 interviewees, 62.5%), while 3 (12.5%) work for TV and 2 (8.3%) work for both. The *Kenyan* interviewees were similar, where 18 (69.2%) primarily work for print outlets, 4 (15.4%) primarily for TV, and 1 primarily for radio. In *Serbia*, 9 of those who specified their current place of employment registered working for print (36% of interviewees), and another 9 journalists for TV. Finally, this was more balanced among *South African* interviewees, where 9 journalists work for print, 6 for TV, and 2 for radio. It should be noted that only 1 Kenyan interviewee registered working for an online media outlet.[16]

As there is a sharp division between ***different types of journalistic practices and roles*** in some of the countries of the study, journalists across all tasks and hierarchies have been interviewed. The interviewed *Egyptian* journalists nowadays

[16] Missing values are due to the fact that not all interviewees currently work as journalist.

work across several ***beats;*** 8 out of 22 interviewees who provided an answer here work in news and current affairs (27.3%), another 8 (36.4%) work in foreign and domestic politics, while 5 (22.7%) work on other beats, such as, features and investigations. Among the *Kenyan* interviewees, most of them combine the news and current affairs and politics beats (18 out of 24 interviewees, 75%), while others work on crime and law (5 interviewees), as well as other beats including parliamentary news and development. Moreover, amongst the *Serbian* interviewees, 2 out of 18 respondents work on the current affairs beat, while 6 (33.3%) work on foreign and domestic politics, and another 6 (33.3%) work for other beats like economy, crime & law, security and society and another 2 work on more than 1 beat. Finally, among the 18 *South African* interviewees who indicated their current beats, 14 (77.7%) combine the news and politics beats, while 1 works on crime & law and 2 interviewees identify as working on general topics with no specific beat.

As for ***hierarchy***, 4 of the *Egyptian* interviewees are currently editors-in-chief, while 3 are managing editors, 2 are department heads, and 5 (20.8%) are editors. Others are heads of regional officers (2 interviewees) or vice managing editors (2 interviewees). No junior-level journalists were interviewed. Among the *Kenyan* interviewees, 10 interviewees currently work as reporters and news writers. Other positions included columnists (2 interviewees), regional editors (2 interviewees), and senior reporters (3 interviewees), as well as a correspondent, an associate editor, and a senior producer. Among the *Serbian* journalists, a balance was achieved between senior and junior-level positions, where 3 editors–in-chief, 2 department heads and 3 senior editors were interviewed, as well as 5 reporters, 1 news editor and 1 sub-editor. Among the *South African* interviewees are more reporters (9 interviewees) than those in managerial positions. Other positions included a desk head/assignment editor, columnist, an editor, and a news anchor.

Regarding ***the form of employment***, most interviewees in all four countries are employed full-time nowadays: 95.5% of *Egyptian* interviewees, 87.5% of *Kenyan* interviewees, 77.3% of *Serbian* interviewees, and 85% of *South African* interviewees.[17]

[17] 22 Egyptian, 24 Kenyan, 22 Serbian and 20 South African interviewees provided answers on their current status of employment.

The level of involvement in ***professional journalistic associations*** is rather high among the *Egyptian* and *Kenyan* interviewees (95.2% and 87% respectively) in comparison to *the Serbian* and *South African* interviewees (62.5% and 68.2% respectively).[18]

None of the *Egyptian r*espondents provided an answer in regards to the interviewees' ***ethnic affiliation***. 19 of 26 *Kenyan* interviewees responded, with Luo being the most common ethnic group among the interviewees (5 journalists) followed by Luhya (4 journalists), Kikuyu (2), Kisii (2), and Somali (2). Other journalists were Kalenjin, Indian/Kenyan, or Ugandan. Of the *Serbian* interviewees, 15 (64%) did not provide an answer to the ethnic affiliation question; the rest identified as Serbian. Similarly, a large number of the *South African* interviewees also did not provide an answer (19 journalists, 80%); those who did identified as Black Zimbabwean, Black-Sotho, Indian, or African.

Finally, as for their ***religious affiliation***, the *Egyptian* interviewees provided the highest rate of responses, where 14 (66.7%) of 21 respondents in this category are Muslim and 7 (33.3%) are Coptic Christian. Among the 15 *Kenyan* journalists who provided an answer to this question, 12 interviewees (80%) are Christian, among which 2 identified as Protestant Christian, in addition to 2 Muslim journalists. Only 8 responses were recorded among the Serbian journalists, where 2 stated being atheist, 4 identified as (Orthodox) Christian, and 1 as “none”. The lowest rate of responses to this question was among the South African interviewees (3 out of 24), where 1 reported being atheist, 1 identified as Muslim, 1 as Christian.

[18] 21 Egyptian, 23 Kenyan, 24 Serbian and 22 South African interviewees indicated whether they are member of a professional organisation. It has to be noted that some journalists are members of several organisations.